MONTHE

APRIL 1949

ELECTED SILENCE—II
Thomas Merton

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Abbé Henri Breuil

STRAVINSKY'S MASS Edmund Rubbra

> POOR FOOLS Georges Bernanos

> > **REVIEWS**

by -

Hubert Wellington, Edmund Esdaile, W. H. Gardner, Martin Turnell, Frederick C. Copleston

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APRIL 1949

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ELECTED SILENCE-II'

By THOMAS MERTON

IV

Street to Seymour's wife and went up-state into the hills behind Olean. Lax's brother-in-law had a cottage, on top of a hill, from which you could see miles over New York and Pennsylvania—miles of blue hill-tops and wooded ridges, miles of forest smudged here and there, in the dry weeks, with smoke, and gashed open, in the neighbouring valley, by the lumbermen. All day and all night the silence of the wood was broken by the coughing of oil-pumps, and when you passed through the trees you could see long metal arms moving back and forth clumsily in the shadows of the glade, because the hills were full of oil.

Lax and I and Rice moved in to the cottage, and looked around for places to put our typewriters. There was one big room with a huge stone fireplace and the works of Rabelais and a table which we presently ruined, feeding ourselves on it with hamburgers and canned beans and untold quarts of milk. There was a porch which looked out over the hills and where we eventually erected a trapeze. It was very pleasant to sit on the step of this porch, and look at the valley in the quiet evening, and play the drums. We had a pair of *bongos*, a Cuban double-drum, which is played two-handed and gives several different tones, depending where and how you hit it.

In order to make sure we would have plenty of books, we went down to the library of St. Bonaventure's College where this time, being baptized, I was no longer scared of the Friars. The librarian was Father Irenaeus, who looked up at us through his glasses and recognized Lax with ingenuous surprise. He always seemed to be surprised and glad to see everybody. Lax introduced us to him: "This is Ed Rice, this is Tom Merton."

¹ Further selections from the autobiography of Thomas Merton to be published shortly by Messrs. Hollis and Carter.

"They were at Columbia, too," said Lax.

"Ah, Columbia," said Father Irenaeus. "I studied at the Columbia Library School," and then he took us into his own library and with reckless trust abandoned all the shelves to us. It never occurred to him to place any limit upon those who seemed to like books. If they wanted books, well, this was a library. He had plenty of books, that was what a library was for. You could take as many as you liked, and keep them until you were through: he was astonishingly free of red tape, this happy little Franciscan. When I got to know the Friars a little better I found out that this trait was fairly universal. Those who love rigid and methodical systems have their life of penance all cut out for them if they enter the Franciscans, and especially if they become superiors. But as far as I know, Father Irenaeus has never been robbed of his books on a larger scale than any other librarian, and on the whole, the little library at St. Bonaventure's was always one of the most orderly and peaceful I have ever seen.

Presently we came out of the stacks with our arms full.

"May we take all these, Father?"

"Sure, sure, that's fine, help yourself."

We signed a vague sort of ticket, and shook hands.

"Good-bye, Mr. Myrtle," said the Friar, and stood in the open door and folded his hands as we started down the steps with our spoils.

I still did not know that I had discovered a place where I was

going to find out something about happiness.

The books we took back to the cottage were hardly opened all summer: but anyway, they were there, lying around, in case we needed something to read. But really they were not necessary: for we eventually found places that proved very suitable for our typewriters, and all started writing novels.

The mere pleasure of sitting on top of this wooded mountain, with miles of country and cloudless sky to look at, and birds to listen to all day, and the healthy activity of writing page after page of novel, out under a tree facing the garage, made those

weeks happy ones, in a natural sort of way.

We could have made even more of it than we did. I think we all had a sort of feeling that we could be hermits up on that hill: but the trouble was that none of us really knew how and I who was in a way the most articulate, whenever it came to matters of

conduct still had the strongest urges to go down into the valleys and see what was on at the movies, or play the slot machines, or drink beer.

The best we could do about expressing our obscure desire of living lives that were separate and in some sense dedicated was to allow our beards to grow, which they did more or less slowly. Lax ended up with the best. It was black and solemn. Rice's was rather ragged, but it looked fine when he grinned, because he had big teeth and slanting eyes like an Eskimo. I myself enter-

tained the secret belief that I looked like Shakespeare.

The cottage would have made a good hermitage, and I now wish we had more exploited its possibilities. Lax was the only one who had the sense to get up, sometimes, very early in the morning, about sunrise. For my own part I usually slept till about eight, then fried a couple of eggs and swallowed a bowl of cornflakes and started at once to write. The closest I got to using the solitude for meditation was when I spent a few afternoons under a little peach tree in the high grass of what might have been a lawn, and read, at last, St. Augustine's *Confessions* and parts of St. Thomas's *Summa*.

I had accepted Lax's principle about sanctity being possible to those who willed it, and filed it away in my head with all my other principles—and still I did nothing about using it. What was this curse that was on me, that I could not translate belief into action. I was content to speculate and argue: and I think the reason is that my knowledge was too much a mere matter of natural and intellectual consideration. Aristotle placed the highest natural felicity in the knowledge of God which was accessible to him, a pagan. The heights that can be reached by metaphysical speculation introduce a man into a realm of pure and subtle pleasure that offers the most nearly permanent delights you can find in the natural order. When you go one step higher, and base your speculations on premisses that are revealed, the pleasure gets deeper and more perfect still. Yet even though the subject matter may be the mysteries of the Christian faith, the manner of contemplating them, speculative and impersonal, may still not transcend the natural plane, at least as far as practical consequences go.

In such an event, you get, not contemplation, but a kind of intellectual and aesthetic gluttony—a high and refined and even

virtuous form of selfishness. And when it leads to no movement of the will towards God, no efficacious love of Him, it is sterile and dead, this meditation, and could even accidentally become, under certain circumstances, a kind of sin—at least an imperfection.

Experience has taught me one big moral principle, which is this: it is totally impractical to plan your actions on the basis of a vast two-columned list of possibilities, with mortal sins on one side and things that are "not a mortal sin" on the other—the one to be avoided, the other to be accepted without discussion.

Yet this hopelessly misleading division of possibilities is what serves large numbers of Catholics as a whole moral theology. It is not so bad when they are so busy working for a living that the range of possibilities is more or less cut down and determined: but Heaven help them when they go on their vacation, or when Saturday night comes around. It is one reason for the number of drunken Irishmen in the world on Saturday nights for, as we know, incomplete drunkenness is per se a venial sin. Therefore apply the two-column principle. You run your finger down the column of mortal sins per se. Going to a movie in which a man and woman maul each other at close range for hundreds of feet of film is not a mortal sin per se. Neither is incomplete drunkenness, nor gambling and so on. Therefore all these belong to the order of pursuits which are not illicit. Therefore they are licit. Therefore if anyone says, no matter with what qualifications, that you ought not to do these things—he is a heretic. If people are not careful, they get themselves into the position of arguing that it is virtuous to go to the movies, to gamble, to get half-drunk. . . .

I know what I am talking about, because that was the way I was still trying to live in those days. Do you want to see the two-column principle in operation? Here is an example of a lot of things which were not mortal sins in themselves. What they were per accidens I am afraid to say: I leave them up to the mercy of God; but they were done by one whom He was calling to a life of perfection, a life dedicated to the joy of serving and loving Him alone. . . .

A carnival came to Bradford. To us that meant a couple of Ferris wheels and a bingo game and the "whip" and a man wearing a white uniform and a crash helmet being fired out of a cannon into a net. We got into the car and started out along the Rock

City road, through the dark woods alive with the drumming of

the oil pumps.

It was a big carnival. It seemed to fill the bottom of a narrow valley, one of the zig-zag valleys in which Bradford is hidden, and the place blazed with lights. The stacks of the oil refinery stood up, beyond the lights, like the guardians of hell. We walked into the white glare and the noise of crazy electric music and the thick sweet smell of candy.

"Hey, fellows, come over this way, if you please."

We turned our beards shyly towards the man in shirt sleeves hatted with a felt hat, leaning out of his booth. We could see the coloured board, the numbers. We approached. He began to explain to us that, out of the kindness of his big foolish heart, he was conducting this game of chance which was so easy and simple that it really amounted to a kind of public charity, a means for endowing intelligent and honest young men like ourselves with a handsome patrimony.

We listened to his explanation. It was not one of those games where you won a box of popcorn, that was evident. In fact, although it started at a quarter, the ante doubled at every throw:

of course, so did the prize, and the prize was in dollars.

"All you have to do is roll the little ball into these holes and . . ."

And he explained just what holes you had to roll the little ball into. Each time you had to get a new and different combination of numbers.

"You put down a quarter," said our benefactor, "and you are about to win two dollars and fifty cents. If you should happen to miss it the first time, it will be all the better for you, because for fifty cents you'll win five dollars—for one dollar you'll take

ten—for two you'll take twenty."

We put down our quarters, and rolled the little balls into the wrong holes.

"Good for you," said the man, "now you stand a chance of winning twice as much." And we all put down fifty cents.

"Fine, keep it up, you're getting ready to win more and more each time—you can't miss, it's in-ev-i-table!"

He pocketed a dollar bill from each of us.

"That's the way, men, that's the way," he exclaimed, as we all rolled the little balls into the wrong holes again.

I paused and asked him to go over the rules of the game a second time. He did, and I listened closely. It was as I thought. I hadn't the vaguest idea what he was talking about. You had to get certain combinations of numbers, and for my own part I was completely unable to figure out what the combinations were. He simply told us what to shoot for, and then rapidly added up

all the numbers and announced:

"You just missed it. Try again, you're so close you can't fail." And the combinations changed again.

In about two and a half minutes he had taken all our money except for a dollar which I was earnestly saving for the rest of the carnival and for beer. How, he asked us, could we have the

heart to quit now? Here we were right on the point of cleaning up, getting back all our losses, and winning a sum that made us dizzy: three hundred and fifty dollars.

"Men," he said, "you can't quit now, you're just throwing away your money if you quit. It doesn't make sense, does it? You didn't come all the way out here just to throw away your dough? Use your heads, boys. Can't you see you've got to win?"

Rice got that big grin on his face that meant, "Let's get out of here."

"We haven't any more money," someone said.

"Have you any traveller's cheques?" the philanthropist inquired.

But I never saw anyone so absorbed and solemn as Lax was, at that moment, in his black beard, with his head bowed over all those incomprehensible numbers. So he looked at me and I looked at him, and the man said:

"If you want to run home and get a little more money. I'll hold the game open for you-how's that?"

We said: "Hold the game open, we'll be back."

We got into the car and drove, in the most intense silence, fifteen miles or whatever the distance was to the cottage, and fifteen miles back, with thirty-five dollars and all the rest of the money we had: but the thirty-five alone were for the game.

When the benefactor of the poor saw the three of us come through the gate again, he really looked surprised and a little scared. The expressions on our faces must have been rather frightening, and perhaps he imagined that we had gone home not only to get our money but our guns.

We walked up to the booth.

"You held this game open for us, huh?"

"Yes, indeed, men, the game is open."

"Explain it over again."

I

He explained it over again. He told us what we had to get to win—it seemed impossible to miss. We put the money down on the counter and Lax rolled the little ball—into the wrong holes.

"Is that all, boys?" said the prince of charity.

"That's all." We turned on our heels and went away.

With the money I had kept in my pocket we went into the other places we would have done well to keep out of, and saw all of the carnival, and then went into Bradford where, drinking beer in a bar, we began to feel better and started to assuage our wounds by telling a lot of fancy lies to some girls we met in the bar—they were maids who worked at the T.B. sanatorium at Rocky Crest, on the mountain about a mile and a half from the cottage.

I remember that as the evening went on there was a fairly large mixed audience of strangers gathered around the table where we were holding forth about the amusement ring which we managed and controlled. It was called the Panama-American Entertainment Corporation, and was so magnificent that it made the present carnival in Bradford look like a sideshow. However, the effect was somewhat spoiled when a couple of Bradford strong men came up with no signs of interest in our story, and said:

"If we see you guys around here again with those beards we are going to knock your heads off."

So Rice stood up and said: "Yeah? Do you want to fight?"

Everybody went out into the alley, and there was a great deal of talk back and forth, but no fight, which was a good thing. They were quite capable of making us eat those beards.

We eventually found our way home, but Rice did not dare try to drive the car into the garage for fear he would miss the door. He stopped short in the driveway and we opened the doors of the car and rolled out and lay on the grass, looking blindly up into the stars while the earth rolled and pitched beneath us like a floundering ship. The last thing I remember about that night was that Rice and I eventually got up and walked into the house, and found Lax sitting in one of the chairs in the living-

room, talking aloud, and uttering a lot of careful and wellthought-out statements directed to a pile of dirty clothes, bundled up ready for the laundry, which somebody had left in another armchair on the other side of the room.

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It was a hot day, a rainy day, in the middle of August when I came out of the subway into the heat of Harlem. There were not many people on the streets that afternoon. I walked along the street until I came to the middle of the block, and saw one or two stores marked "Friendship House" and "Bl. Martin de Porres Centre" or some such title in big blue letters. There did

not seem to be anyone around.

The biggest of the stores was the library, and there I found half a dozen young Negroes, boys and girls, high-school students, sitting at a table. Some of them wore glasses, and it seemed they were having some kind of an organized intellectual discussion, because when I came in they got a little embarrassed about it. I asked them if the Baroness was there, and they said no, she had gone downtown because it was her birthday, and I asked who I should see, so they told me Mary Jerdo. She was around somewhere. If I waited she would probably show up in a

So I stood there, and took down off the shelf Father Bruno's

Life of St. John of the Cross and looked at the pictures.

The young Negroes tried to pick up their discussion where they had left off: but they did not succeed. The stranger made them nervous. One of the girls opened her mouth and pronounced three or four abstract words, and then broke off into a giggle. Then another one opened her mouth and said: "Yes, but don't you think . . .?" And this solemn question also collapsed in embarrassed tittering. One of the young men got off a whole paragraph or so, full of big words, and everybody roared with laughter. So I turned around and started to laugh too, and immediately the whole thing became a game.

They began saying big words just because it was funny. They uttered the most profoundly dull and ponderous statements, and laughed at them, and at the fact that such strange things had come out of their mouths. But soon they calmed down, and then Mary Jerdo came along, and showed me the different departments of Friendship House, and explained what they were.

The embarrassment of those young Negroes was something that gave me a picture of Harlem: the details of the picture were

to be filled in later, but the essentials were already there.

Here in this huge, dark, steaming slum, hundreds of thousands of Negroes are herded together like cattle, most of them with nothing to eat and nothing to do. All the senses and imagination and sensibilities and emotions and sorrows and desires and hopes and ideas of a race with vivid feelings and deep emotional reactions are forced in upon themselves, bound inward by an iron ring of frustration: the prejudice that hems them in with its four insurmountable walls. In this huge cauldron, inestimable natural gifts, wisdom, love, music, science, poetry are stamped down and left to boil with the dregs of an elementally corrupted nature, and thousands upon thousands of souls are destroyed by vice and misery and degradation, obliterated, wiped out, washed from the register of the living, dehumanized.

What has not been devoured, in your dark furnace, Harlem,

by marihuana, by gin, by insanity, hysteria, syphilis?

Those who manage somehow to swim to the top of the seething cauldron, and remain on its surface, through some special spiritual quality or other, or because they have been able to get away from Harlem, and go to some college or school, these are not all at once annihilated: but they are left with the dubious privilege of living out the only thing Harlem possesses in the way of an ideal. They are left with the sorry task of contemplating and imitating

what passes for culture in the world of the white people.

Now the terrifying paradox of the whole thing is this: Harlem itself, and every individual Negro in it, is a living condemnation of our so-called "culture." Harlem is there by way of a divine indictment against New York City and the people who live downtown and make their money downtown. The brothels of Harlem, and all its prostitution, and its dope-rings, and all the rest are the mirror of the polite divorces and the manifold cultured adulteries of Park Avenue: they are God's commentary on the whole of our society.

Harlem is, in a sense, what God thinks of Hollywood. And Hollywood is all Harlem has, in its despair, to grasp at, by way of a

surrogate for heaven.

The most terrible thing about it all is that there is not a Negro in the whole place who does not realize, somewhere in the depths of his nature, that the culture of the white man is not worth the dirt in Harlem's gutters. And yet they are condemned to reach out for it, and to pretend they like it, as if the whole thing were some kind of bitter cosmic conspiracy: as if they were thus being forced to work out, in their own lives, a clear representation of the misery which has corrupted the ontological roots of the white man's own existence.

The little children of Harlem are growing up crowded together in tenements where evil takes place hourly and inescapably before their eyes, so that there is not an excess of passion, not a perversion of natural appetite with which they are not familiar before the age of six or seven. What was heard in secret in the bedrooms of the rich and cultured and the white is preached from the housetops of Harlem and there declared, for what it is, in all its horror, somewhat as it is seen in the eyes of God, naked and frightful.

No, there is not a Negro in the whole place who can fail to know, in the marrow of his own bones, that the white man's culture is not worth the jetsam in the Harlem River.

That night I came back to Harlem, since Mary Jerdo told me to, and had dinner with them all, and congratulated the Baroness on her birthday, and we saw a play that was put on by the little Negro children in the recreation room of the group called the "Cubs."

It was an experience that nearly tore me to pieces. All the parents of the children were there, sitting on benches, literally choked with emotion at the fact that their children should be acting in a play: but that was not the thing. For, as I say, they knew that the play was nothing, and that all the plays of the white people are more or less nothing. They were not taken in by that. Underneath it was something wonderful and positive and overwhelming: their gratitude for even so small a sign of love as this, that someone should at least make some kind of gesture that said: "This sort of thing cannot make anybody happy, but it is a way of saying: 'I wish you were happy.'"

Over against the profound and positive and elemental reality of this human love, not unmixed with Christ's charity and almost obtrusively holy, was the idiotic character of the play itself. Some

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one of those geniuses who write one-act plays for amateur theatricals had thought up the idea of having King Arthur and his Knights appear in modern dress, running around in a country club.

Let me tell you, this piece of wit became so devastating that it nearly gave me grey hairs watching its presentation by little Negro children in the midst of that slum. The nameless author, speaking in the name of twentieth-century middle-class culture, said: "Here is something very jolly." God, replying through the mouths and eyes and actions of these little Negro children, and through their complete incomprehension of what the jokes and the scene and the situations could possibly be about, said: "This is what I think of your wit. It is an abomination in my sight. I do not know you, I do not know your society: you are as dead to me as hell itself. These little Negro children I know and love: but you I know not. You are anathema."

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Two or three nights later there was another play put on in the parish hall by an older group. It was the same kind of a play, all about rich people having a good time, presented by poor, hapless Negro youths and girls who had no means of knowing anything about a good time that was so inane and idiotic—or so expensive. The very zest and gaiety and enthusiasm with which they tried to make something out of this miserable piece of trash only condemned its author and his inspiration all the more forcibly. And you were left with the sense that these Negroes, even in Harlem, would have been able to give all the rich men on Sutton Place lessons in how to be happy without half trying: and that was why their imitation of the ruling class was all the more damning an indictment.

If the Baroness had tried to face the tremendous paradox of Harlem with no other weapons than these, I think Friendship House would have closed down in three days. But the secret of her success and of her survival in the teeth of this gigantic problem was that she depended not on these frail human methods, not on theatricals, or meetings, or speeches, or conferences, but on God,

Christ, the Holy Ghost. According to the plan of her vocation, the Baroness herself had come to Harlem and had started to live there for God, and God

had brought her quickly into contact with the others who were serving in His secret police in this enemy city: the saints He had

sent to sanctify and purify, not Harlem, but New York.

On Judgment Day the citizens of that fat metropolis with its mighty buildings and its veins bursting with dollars and its brains overreaching themselves with new optimistic philosophies of culture and progress, will be astounded when they find out who it was that was keeping the brimstone and thunderbolts of God's anger from wiping them long since from the face of the earth.

Living in the same building as most of the Friendship House workers was an ageing Negro woman, thin, quiet, worn out, dying of cancer. I only saw her once or twice, but I heard a lot about her; for everyone said that she had visions of Our Lady. About that I know nothing, except that if Our Lady were to act according to her usual custom, Harlem would be one of the first and only places I would expect her to appear—Harlem, or some share-cropper's cabin in Alabama, or some miner's shack in Pennsylvania.

The only time I spoke to her and got a good look at her, I realized one thing: she possessed the secret of Harlem, she knew the way out of the labyrinth. For her the paradox had ceased to exist, she was no longer in the cauldron, except by the pure accident of physical presence, which counts for nothing since the cauldron is almost entirely of the moral order. And when I saw her and spoke to her, I saw in this tired, serene, and holy face the patience and joy of the martyrs and the clear, unquenchable light of sanctity. She and some other Catholic women were sitting on chairs by the doorsteps of the building, in the relatively cool street, in the early evening: and the group they made there, in the midst of the turmoil of the lost crowd, astounded the passer-by with the sense of peace, of conquest: that deep, deep, unfathomable, shining peace that is in the eyes of Negro women who are really full of belief!

Seeing the boys and girls in the library, I had got some insight into the problem of Harlem. Here, just across the street, I saw the solution, the only solution: faith, sanctity. It was not far to seek

If the Baroness, biding her time, letting the children put on plays, giving them some place where they could at least be off the street and out of the way of the traffic, could gather around her souls like these holy women and could form, in her organization, others that were, in the same way, saints, whether white or coloured, she would not only have won her way, but she might eventually, by the grace of God, transfigure the face of

Harlem. She had before her many measures of meal, but there was at hand already more than a little leaven. We know the way Christ works. No matter how impossible the thing may look from a human angle, we may wake up one morning and find that the whole is leavened. It may be done with saints!

For my own part, I knew that it was good for me to be there, and so for two or three weeks I came down every night and ate dinner with the little community of them, in the apartment, and recited Compline afterwards—in English—all together, lined up in the narrow room in two choirs. It was the only time they ever did anything that made them look like religious, and there was not much that was really formally choral about it. It was strictly a family affair.

After that, for two or three hours, I devoted myself to the task of what was euphemistically called "looking after the Cubs." I stayed in the store that was their play-room, and played the piano as much for my own amusement as for anything else, and tried, by some sort of moral influence, to preserve peace and prevent a really serious riot. If a true fight had ever started, I don't know what would have happened. But most of the time everything was peace. They played ping-pong and monopoly, and for one little kid I drew a picture of the Blessed Virgin.

"Who is that?" he said.

"It is Our Blessed Mother."

Immediately his expression changed, became clouded over with a wild and strong devotion that was so primitive that it astonished me. He began crooning over and over: "Blessed Mother... Blessed Mother," and seized the picture and ran out into the street.

VI

On the morning of the Sunday before Palm Sunday I got up before five, and heard part of a Mass in the dark chapel and then had to make a run for the train. The rain fell on the empty station straight and continuous.

All the way down the line, in the pale, growing day, the hills were black, and rain drenched the valley and flooded the sleeping valley towns. Somewhere past Jamestown I took out my Breviary and said the Little Hours, and when we got into Ohio the rain stopped.

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We changed stations at Galion, and on the fast train down to Columbus I got something to eat, and in southern Ohio the air was drier still, and almost clearing. Finally, in the evening, in the long rolling hills that led the way in to Cincinnati, you could see the clouds tearing open all along the western horizon to admit long streaks of sun.

It was an American landscape, big, vast, generous, fertile, and leading beyond itself into limitless expanses, open spaces, the whole West. My heart was full!

So when we entered Cincinnati, in the evening, with the lights coming on among all the houses and the electric signs shining on the hills, and the huge freight yards swinging open on either side of the track and the high buildings in the distance, I felt as if I owned the world. And yet that was not because of all these things, but because of Gethsemani, where I was going. It was the fact that I was passing through all this, and did not desire it, and wanted no part in it, and did not seek to grasp or hold any of it, that I could exult in it, and it all cried out to me: God! God!

I went to Mass and Communion the next morning in Cincinnati, and then took the train for Louisville, and waited in Louisville all the rest of the day because I did not have the sense to take a bus to one of the towns near Gethsemani and buy a ride from there to the monastery.

It was not until after night fell that there was a train out to Gethsemani, on the line to Atlanta.

It was a slow train. The coach was dimly lighted, and full of people whose accents I could hardly understand, and you knew you were in the South because all the Negroes were huddled in a separate car. The train got out of the city into country that was abysmally dark, even under the moon. You wondered if there were any houses out there. Pressing my face to the window, and shading it with my hands, I saw the outline of a bare, stony landscape with sparse trees. The little towns we came to looked poor and forlorn and somewhat fierce in the darkness.

And the train went its slow way through the spring night, branching off at Bardstown junction. And I knew my station was coming.

I stepped down out of the car into the empty night. The station was dark. There was a car standing there, but no man in sight. There was a road, and the shadow of a sort of a factory

a little distance away, and a few houses under some trees. In one of them was a light. The train had hardly stopped to let me off, and immediately gathered its ponderous momentum once again and was gone around the bend with the flash of a red tail light, leaving me in the middle of the silence and solitude of the Kentucky hills.

I put my bag down in the gravel, wondering what to do next. Had they forgotten to make arrangements for me to get to the monastery? Presently the door of one of the houses opened, and

a man came out, in no hurry.

We got in the car together, and started up the road, and in a minute we were in the midst of moonlit fields.

"Are the monks in bed?" I asked the driver. It was only a few minutes past eight.

"Oh, yes, they go to bed at seven o'clock."

"Is the monastery far?"
"Mile and a half."

I looked at the rolling country, and at the pale ribbon of road in front of us, stretching out as grey as lead in the light of the moon. Then suddenly I saw a steeple that shone in the moonlight, growing into sight from behind a rounded knoll. The tyres sang on the empty road, and, breathless, I looked at the monastery that was revealed before me as we came over the rise. At the end of an avenue of trees was a big rectangular block of buildings, all dark, with a church crowned by a tower and a steeple and a cross: and the steeple was as bright as platinum and the whole place was as midnight and lost in the all-absorbing silence and solitude of the fields. Behind the monastery was a dark curtain of woods, and over to the west was a wooded valley, and beyond that a rampart of wooded hills, a barrier and a defence against the world.

And over all the valley smiled the mild, gentle Easter moon,

the full moon in her kindness, loving this silent place.

At the end of the avenue, in the shadows under the trees, I could make out the lowering arch of the gate, and the words: "Pax Intrantibus."

The driver of the car did not go to the bell rope by the heavy wooden door. Instead he went over and scratched on one of the windows and called, in a low voice:

"Brother! Brother!"

I could hear someone stirring inside.

Presently the key turned in the door. I passed inside. The door

closed quietly behind me. I was out of the world.

The effect of that big, moonlit court, the heavy stone building with all those dark and silent windows, was overpowering. I could hardly answer the Brother's whispered questions.

I looked at his clear eyes, his greying, pointed beard.

When I told him I came from St. Bonaventure's, he said drily:

"I was a Franciscan once."

We crossed the court, climbed some steps, entered a high, dark hall. I hesitated on the brink of a polished, slippery floor, while the Brother groped for the light switch. Then, above another heavy door, I saw the words: "God alone."

"Have you come here to stay?" said the Brother.

The question terrified me. It sounded too much like the voice

of my own conscience.

"Oh, no!" I said. "Oh, no!" And I heard my whisper echoing around the hall and vanishing up the indefinite, mysterious heights of a dark stair-well above our heads. The place smelled frighteningly clean: polished and swept and repainted and repainted over and over, year after year.

"What's the matter? Why can't you stay? Are you married

or something?" said the Brother.

"No," I said lamely, "I have a job. . . . "

We began to climb the wide stairs. Our steps echoed in the empty darkness. One flight and then another and a third and a fourth. There was an immense distance between floors; it was a building with great ceilings. Finally we came to the top floor, and the Brother opened the door into a wide room, and put down my bag, and left me.

I heard his steps crossing the yard below, to the gate house.

And I felt the deep, deep silence of the night, and of peace, and of holiness enfold me like love.

The embrace of it, the silence! I had entered into a solitude that was an impregnable fortress. And the silence that enfolded me, spoke to me, and spoke louder and more eloquently than any voice, and in the middle of that quiet, clean-smelling room, with the moon pouring its peacefulness in through the open window, with the warm night air, I realized truly whose house that was, O glorious Mother of God!

How did I ever get back out of there, into the world, after tasting the sweetness and the kindness of the love with which you welcome those that come to stay in your house, even only

for a few days, O Queen of Heaven?

It is very true that the Cistercian Order is your special territory and that those monks in white cowls are your special servants, servitores Sanctae Mariae. Their houses are all yours—Notre Dame, Notre Dame, all around the world. Notre Dame de Gethsemani: there was still something of the bravery and simplicity and freshness of twelfth-century devotion, the vivid faith of St. Bernard of Clairvaux and Adam of Perseigne and Guerric of Igny and Ailred of Rievaulx and Robert of Molesme, here in the hills of Kentucky: and I think the century of Chartres was most of all your century, my Lady, because it spoke you clearest, for who you are, most powerful, most glorious, Mediatrix of All Grace, and the most High Queen of Heaven, high above all the angels, and throned in glory near the throne of your Divine Son.

And of all things, it is the Rules of the Religious Orders dedicated to you, that are loudest and truest in proclaiming your honour, and your greatness obliquely by the sacrifices that love of you drives men to make. So it is that the Usages of the Cistercians are a Canticle for your glory, Queen of Angels, and those who live those Usages proclaim your tremendous prerogatives louder than the most exalted sermons. The white cowl of

the silent Cistercian has got the gift of tongues.

How shall I explain to those who have not seen these holy houses the might of the truths that overpowered me all the days

of that week?

At four o'clock in the morning the following day, bells were flying out of the tower in the high, astounding darkness as I groped half-blind with sleep for my clothing, and hastened into the hall and down the dark stairs. I did not know where to go, and there was no one to show me, but I saw two men in secular clothes at the bottom of the stairs, going through a door. One of them was a priest with a great head of white hair, the other was a young man with black hair, in a pair of dungarees. I went after them through the door. We were in a hallway, completely black, except I could see their shadows moving towards a big window at the end. They knew where they were going, and they found a door which opened and let some light into the hall.

I came after them to the door. It led into the cloister. The cloister was cold, and dimly lit, and the smell of damp wool astounded me by its unearthliness. And I saw the monks. There was one, right there, by the door; he had knelt, or rather thrown himself down, before a pietà in the cloister corner, and had buried his head in the huge sleeves of his cowl there at the feet of the dead Christ, the Christ who lay in the arms of Mary, letting fall one arm and a pierced hand in the limpness of death. It was a picture so fierce that it scared me: the abjection, the dereliction of this seemingly shattered monk at the feet of the broken Christ. I stepped into the cloister as if into an abyss.

The silence with people moving in it was ten times more

gripping than it had been in my own empty room.

And now I was in the church. The two other seculars were kneeling there beside an altar at which the candles were burning. A priest was already at the altar, spreading out the corporal and opening the book. I could not figure out why the secular priest with the great shock of white hair was kneeling down to serve Mass. Maybe he wasn't a priest after all. But I did not have time to speculate about that: my heart was too full of other things in that great dark church, where, in the little chapels, all around the ambulatory behind the high altar, chapels that were caves of dim candlelight, Mass was simultaneously beginning at many altars.

How did I live through that next hour? The silence, the solemnity, the dignity of these Masses and of the church, and the overpowering atmosphere of prayers so fervent that they were almost tangible choked me with love and reverence that robbed me of the power to breathe. I could only get the air in gasps.

O my God, with what might You sometimes choose to teach a man's soul your immense lessons! Here, even through ordinary channels, came to me graces that overwhelmed me like a tidal wave, truths that drowned me with the force of their impact: and all through the plain, normal means of the liturgy—but the liturgy used properly, and with reverence, by souls inured to sacrifice.

What a thing Mass becomes, in hands hardened by gruelling and sacrificial labour, in poverty and abjection and humiliation! "See, see," said those lights, those shadows in all the chapels.

"See who God is! Realize what this Mass is! See Christ here, on the Cross! See His wounds, see His torn hands, see how the King of Glory is crowned with thorns! Do you know what Love is? Here is Love. Here on this Cross, here is Love, suffering these nails, these thorns, that scourge loaded with lead, smashed to pieces, bleeding to death because of your sins and bleeding to death because of people that will never know Him, and never think of Him and will never remember His Sacrifice. Learn from Him how to love God and how to love men! Learn of this Cross, this Love, how to give your life away to Him."

Almost simultaneously all around the church, at all the various altars, the bells began to ring. These monks, they rang no bells at the Sanctus or the Hanc igitur, only at the Consecration: and now, suddenly, solemnly, all around the church, Christ was on the Cross, lifted up, drawing all things to Himself, that tremendous Sacrifice tearing hearts from bodies, and drawing them out

to Him.

"See, see who God is, see the glory of God, going up to Him out of this incomprehensible and infinite Sacrifice in which all history begins and ends, all individual lives begin and end, in which every story is told, and finished, and settled for joy or for sorrow, the one point of reference for all the truths that are outside of God, their centre, their focus: Love."

Faint gold fire flashed from the shadowy flanks of the upraised

chalice at our altar.

"Do you know what Love is? You have never known the meaning of Love, never, you who have always drawn all things to the centre of your own nothingness. Here is Love in this chalice full of Blood, Sacrifice, mactation. Do you not know that to love means to be killed for glory of the Beloved? And where is your love? Where is now your Cross, if you say you want to follow Me, if you pretend you love Me?"

All around the church the bells rang as gentle and fresh as dew. "But these men are dying for Me. These monks are killing themselves for Me: and for you, for the world, for the people who do not know Me, for the millions that will never know them on this earth. ..."

After Communion I thought my heart was going to explode. When the church had practically emptied after the second round of Masses, I left and went to my room. When I next came back to church it was to kneel in the high balcony in the far end of the nave, for Tierce and Sext and then None and the Conventual Mass.

And now the church was full of light, and the monks stood in their stalls and bowed at the ends of the psalms, those slow, rich, sombre and yet lucid tones of the psalms, praising God in His new morning, thanking Him for the world He had created

and for the life He continued to give it.

Those psalms, the singing of the monks, and especially the ferial tone for the Little Hours' Hymns: what springs of life and strength and grace were in their singing! The whole earth came to life and bounded with new fruitfulness and significance in the joy of their simple and beautiful chanting that gradually built up to the climax of the conventual Mass: splendid, I say, and yet this Cistercian liturgy in Lent was reduced to the ultimate in simplicity. Therefore it was all the more splendid, because the splendour was intellectual and effective, and not the mere flash and glitter of vestments and decorations.

Two candles were lit on the bare altar. A plain wooden crucifix stood above the Tabernacle. The sanctuary was closed off with a curtain. The white altar cloth fell, at both ends, almost to the floor. The priest ascended the altar steps in a chasuble, accom-

panied by a deacon in alb and stole. And that was all.

At intervals during the Mass, a monk in a cowl detached himself from the choir and went slowly and soberly to minister at the altar, with grave and solemn bows, walking with his long

flowing sleeves dangling almost as low as his ankles. . . .

The eloquence of this liturgy was even more tremendous: and what it said was one, simple, cogent, tremendous truth: this church, the court of the Queen of Heaven, is the real capital of the country in which we are living. This is the centre of all the vitality that is in America. These men, hidden in the anonymity of their choir and their white cowls, are doing for their land what no army, no congress, no president could ever do as such: they are winning for it the grace and the protection and the friendship of God.

PREHISTORIC PAINTING'

By

ABBÉ HENRI BREUIL

HEN at Tangier and Lisbon during the last war I had the pleasure of meeting the author of this book, I little thought that I should one day be reviewing a work of his on Prehistoric Painting. In Lisbon I gave him a set of photographs of the frescoes in the then recently discovered cave of Lascaux, where I had just spent two months, but I never guessed that he would soon be helping to reveal Lascaux to the general public in a way that my own description, which had just then been published in Madrid, could never do, no matter how well it was illustrated.

In his own delightful book Mr. Alan Houghton Brodrick places within everybody's reach a résumé of the main facts concerning the origin and development of Rock Art. He starts with Western Europe (the Franco-Cantabrian region), and then deals with Spain and, finally, with all Africa. It is a little volume of forty pages of text and is written with a clarity and *brio* that will attract many readers glad to get the essentials of the subject without abstruse considerations like that, for instance, of the complicated succession of pictures on the rocky "palimpsests."

It is only after months or even years spent on the floor of dark and damp caves and after long treks in mountains and deserts that the specialist in this subject is able to hammer out, piece by piece, the elements that go to make a scientific discipline; and only in rare and inaccessible books that he publishes his careful copies of the ancient pictures. All this wealth *Prehistoric Painting* places within the reach of artists, teachers and amateurs generally. The brief explanations here given are well within their grasp. The general reader, of course, is not interested in searchers and investigators, but only in the ideas that are the fruit of their toil. All too soon the names of those who founded the science of prehistoric art will be remembered only by its historians. The

² Prehistoric Painting, by Alan Houghton Brodrick. 40 pages text, 4 plates in colour and 52 in monochrome, 7 line illustrations. (Avalon Press, Ltd., 10s. 6d.)

searcher's work brings him the incomparable joys of discovery, the formulation of an idea and the establishment of a theory. These become everybody's gain, and so his patient labour is well rewarded.

Like myself and many others, Mr. Brodrick is convinced that it is not by mere chance that the animals of Spanish Levantine art resemble those of the painted caves of Aquitaine and of Cantabria; and, moreover, that it is not by coincidence that this Levantine art, with its fondness for scenes in which Man plays an important part, shows striking similarity to the art found on Libyan rocks and in the thousands of rock-shelters which abound in the region from Tanganyika to the southern extremity of the African continent.

It is, therefore, from the Spanish Levant that the author leads his readers; that is to say from the Iberian Mediterranean coast between Barcelona and Almeria. Rightly he attaches no credence to those "Young Turks" of Spain who claim (for no other apparent reason than the pleasure of contradicting their master, the late Hugo Obermaier, and myself) that all the rock-art of the Spanish Levant dates from Neolithic or even more recent times. As though there were any evidence that the Neolithics—and later peoples—ever drew a single naturalistic figure!

Mr. Brodrick begins by stating that Spanish Levantine art and the art of the Aurignacians (at its height) are inter-dependent the same "twisted perspective" of horns and antlers is found in both styles. He rightly insists upon the continuity of Spanish Levantine art through Solutrean art (evidenced by the small engraved and painted plaques of Parpalló), a continuity which contrasts with the gap existing north of the Pyrenees between Aurignacian and Magdalenian arts which, in that region, form two very distinct cycles. The author, however, does not mention one geographical link between the Levantine art and that of Aquitaine. This link is found in the Ardales Cave at Saeliceo in the Spanish province of Guadalajara and was rather summarily described by my regretted friend, the late Juan Cabré. Mr. Brodrick reminds us that Spanish Levantine art gradually sank into diagrammatic designs during the Mesolithic Age and that these continue, in varying forms, into Neo-Eneolithic times. The

The modern description is "Perigordian."

Mesolithic influence is, however, rather less than was at first reckoned by the late Hugo Obermaier.

Mr. Brodrick does not seem to think that this diagrammatic art is older than the Mesolithic or that such an art existed during the Mediterranean Upper Palaeolithic. (I would add "among the shell-fish eaters.") However, a diagrammatic painting on a slab at the Romanelli Cave near Taranto in southern Italy—a piece of evidence not mentioned by the author—makes the existence of this diagrammatic art in Old Stone Age times quite clear.

The author next deals with the cave-art of the Franco-Cantabrian region and with the two peak-periods of this art—the Aurignacian ("Perigordian" or "advanced" at Lascaux) and the Upper Magdalenian of Altamira and of the Font-de-Gaume (Dordogne) whose admirable art-creations he describes.

Probably for want of space he passes rather quickly over the thousands of years of preparation which were needed for each of the art-phases evidenced by the various "palimpsests" on which successive pictorial levels are overlayed. He leaves aside any consideration of the sculpture and engraving on small objects and utensils, but, then, the subject of his study is painting. He gives a bare mention to the engravings and sculptures on the rock-walls and the animal-statues modelled in clay; but he deals at length with the painted and engraved figures of "sorcerers" in the Trois Frères cave and, like myself, believes that these represent a deity presiding (as among the Eskimo) over the multiplication of game—in fact a divinity who will ensure luck in the chase. Also he brings out the magic character of all the isolated figures in Magdalenian art as well as of the (very rare) groups, such as the tragic scene at Lascaux which Mr. Brodrick interprets as I do.

In this part of the work there are a few factual errors of no great importance but which the author will, I trust, forgive me for mentioning. Noailles in the Corrèze is not a painted cave though its archaeological deposit contained many varieties of ochre. In the Combarelles cave (except for some small black

¹ The so-called "Battle of the Reindeer" of Laugerie-Basse (engraved on schist) is, whatever may be thought of it, a specimen of admirable precision and beauty. It depicts a male reindeer following his female.

² The friezes of the Roc de Sers (Charente) and of Cap Blanc (Dordogne) are great works of art, as are the sculptural representations of the human figure from Laussel. The clay statues of bisons at the Tuc d'Audubert (Ariège) are not Solutrean but mid-Magdalenian.

horses) very few of the engravings have retained any traces of colour, though on the orange background of the rock-face the engravings do appear greenish. The great frescoes on the roof at Altamira are not at the end of the right-hand but of the left-hand gallery. On p. 20 La Baume-Latrone (i.e. "Robbers' Cave" in Provençal) is given as "Labanne-Latroue," but this unfortunate misprint is the only one in the whole book. At Lascaux the fine frescoes of the Great Hall are not under but on the calcite coating. The preservation of these pictures has been due, as has that of the paintings at Altamira, to the impermeability of the rock-roof. At Lascaux, moreover, the excellent condition of the frescoes has owed much to the absence of condensation in a cave with a sharply sloping entrance into which only cold air from outside penetrates. The bright red signs at Marsoulas are later in date than the animal figures and the former are probably Azilian.

The last ten pages of the text treat of African rock-art from the north (including four sites in the Sahara) to the south. The immense size of the territory, the great number of painted rocks it contains, and the relatively few reliable and intelligent books published on African rock-paintings, all help to make the subject of African prehistoric art a most difficult one. It is, indeed, a subject on which very differing opinions are held. As one who has devoted a good deal of study to the subject, especially in recent years, I find that I have, in some cases, reached rather different working hypotheses from those entertained by Mr. Brodrick.

Thus, for my part, I do not think that Saharan Neolithic art originated in Egypt, but, on the contrary, that Egyptian civilization was the finest product and the flower springing from the Neolithic substratum. No doubt, however, many other influences than the Saharan were felt in Egypt once the centre in the Nile Valley was established. I do not think that the monuments with spheroids owed their origin to the Egyptian *uraeus*. The contrary is more probable. I am inclined to hold (as did Flamand) that the Neolithic engravings of large *bubalus* (wild in the Fezzan and domesticated in the Oran region) date from the end of the Quaternary Period, since, as this animal cannot flourish without a good deal of water, we must date it back to the last Pluvial Period (Würm) about 10,000 B.C.

However I agree with Mr. Brodrick that all the "bovidian" engravings (and others derived from them but of "quadratic" style) continued until the Roman epoch; and also that there is no connection between this art and that to be found in the oases of Tassili, of the Hoggar, of Fezzan and of Libva. This art was the work of oxherds, although there are some goats in the Tibesti region. The absence of bubalus and of the larger pachyderms from these frescoes makes it impossible for me to regard them as old as the panels of bubalus, and I am inclined to think that this phase of frescoes (but not of the engravings of the same culture) was preceded, even at the same sites, by an art of hunters. an art in which representations of giraffes predominate. My Capsian ostrich egg from Oued Mengoub (which has a bovine animal both painted and engraved on it) does not contradict this theory. Indeed the "Bovidians" of Tassili, though toward their decline, were in contact with horse-breeders and the former copied the chariots of the latter and showed oxen harnessed to the vehicles. The terminus ad quem of their art is, therefore, connected with the introduction of the horse (from Syria to Crete and from Crete into Libya) some time before Rameses II captured horses during the Libyan war and then built studs for horse-breeding (about 1500 B.C.) This date is also the terminus a quo for rock-paintings depicting horses. The terminus a quo for the "bovidian" art on the painted rocks is connected with the domestication of oxen and with the lapse of time necessary for the establishment of the breed with dappled or piebald coats of which representations are common from the Nile Valley (including Egypt) to the Hoggar and the Tibesti region. There were north African wild oxen with very large horns (bos opistonomus); I do not know if the domesticated herds were bred from these wild oxen, but I do know—and this has escaped the author-that on the painted rocks of Harrar (at Genda Biftu among other sites) herds of black oxen with long horns and slender bodies (intermixed with some antelopes) are represented peacefully grazing together with buffaloes (bubalus kaffer) which, like the cows, have their calves beside them. All this probably indicates that we here touch upon the origin of the "bovidian" culture which stretched from Abyssinia to Nubia and up to the Hoggar, after a lapse of sufficient time to allow of the production of speckled coats as well as the improvement of the pictorial art

in the direction of the Levantine Spanish style, an improvement due to an impulse from the Spanish Levant.

By what route can this influence have travelled? Evidently by sea. A battle represented on the Minateda Rock (province of Albacete, Spain) shows, as aggressors, warriors armed with large reflex bows (with three curves) and this weapon marks them clearly as foreigners. The reflex bow, of Asiatic origin, it would appear, was imported into Nilotic Africa. There existed, therefore, contact between the peoples of Mediterranean Iberia and those of North Africa who were doubtless already proto-Neolithic in culture. It is not impossible that the Levantine arttradition which produced this picture travelled by this route. Once adopted by the "bovidian" herdsmen, the art developed among them in magnificent fashion and eventually passed on to the horse-breeders.

The examination of copies of paintings made at Tassili by Captain Brenant (they are partly unpublished but I have specimens of them) reveals a very mixed population from the time of the "bovidians." There are Libyans and foreigners of aristocratic Mediterranean type, and tall Negroes and what are probably pygmies. All this dates from before the introduction of the horse into Libya, but it also dates, I believe, from after the first art with pictures of *bubalus*.

Was it this shepherd-art which crossed the vast spaces stretching to the north of Tanganyika, where the painted rocks begin, and where we also find a naturalistic art which is, however, the work of hunters? During the Nairobi Congress of 1947 I visited with Dr. Leakey several of these painted rocks. Here also are several superimposed pictorial levels. The first five of them (very archaic) recall the line-drawings (in the "twisted perspective") of French mid-Aurignacian art. Farther south than Rhodesia such a style is either rare or quite absent. And this absence is not very favourable to the theory of a South African origin for this art, since it would in this case have spread northward. But this is the theory of my friend Mr. Battiss which is cited with approval by

I Ndanga Victoria is cited by the author as being in the region of the Great Lakes. The Ndanga site (60 miles from Fort Victoria) is also known as "Impey's Cave," which later on the author mentions under that name. I was there in April 1948. The name of the site is Dandabari, near the Ndanga native reserve. Whether they be Greeks or not, there are represented in the painting white oreigners with red hair and long noses.

the author. In Tanganyika it is only in the sixth level that scenes with human figures (in the "Rhodesian" style) are discernible. The sites at the foot of the shelters are of evolved Middle Stone Age as they are in almost all southern and South Africa (i.e. Moustero-Solutrean, "Still Bay" of South Africa)-only the upper levels are Wilton or Smithfield, that is of Later Stone Age. It is the same in Southern Rhodesia (Bambata Cave). In South-West Africa the Wilton appears to be almost non-existent and what little of it to be found suggests an evolution of Middle Stone Age types toward a proto-Smithfield type which is the probable origin of that found in the Orange Free State. A similar industrial phase but with no paintings exists in Kenya.

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The geological age of the Middle Stone Age is as follows: an archaic facies of it is water-worn in a 25-40 ft. beach at Mossel Bay. This places the commencement of the Age during the last interglacial phase. The Still Bay facies plunges beneath the present beach at East London; the facies is, therefore, dated as a Würmian beach not more recent than 10,000 years ago. Thus, all later ages are left for the development, in various facies, of the Late Stone Age (parallel to the Mesolithic in Europe) and all later periods, Neolithic, Copper, etc. These later ages also saw the evolution of Late Stone Age art, in its various stages, both of engraving and of painting. Some of this art seems to me (judging from the physical state of the painted surfaces) to be as old as some of the Spanish Levantine and of the diagrammatic art which followed that Levantine art.

Thus the rock-paintings of southern and of South Africa would not be descendants of those of Spain but "cousins" which were, at first, contemporary with some of the Spanish Levantine frescoes, and then continued (later on) right up into the nineteenth century. In similar circumstances of big game hunting, different peoples (but of comparable cultures) developed arts which are definitely comparable. The same human reactions were produced in parallel fashion and in similar circumstances. In these conditions Bushmen¹ played their part just as did other, but unknown, peoples who were neither Negro, Bantu nor Hottentot. Some came from the borders of Egypt and perhaps lost, through the

In agreement with me, Mr. Brodrick rejects the idea that eastern Spanish art is due to Bushmen. The few profiles visible at Alpera (Albacete) have long, aquiline noses.

action of the tsetse fly, their flocks and herds by the way. Others were perhaps only visitors, traders blown down from the Persian Gulf by the monsoon which had carried men along from the early days when the Sumerians (about 3000 B.C.) built the first sailing-ships which could take the high seas. Paintings in the south-east of Africa seem to represent such visitors, Semitic and others, forerunners of the Arabs, Indians and Chinese who were to come later on.¹

All these considerations are, as is evident from what I have said, being studied both by Mr. Battiss—to whom Mr. Brodrick owes much information which has been hardly touched upon in Mr. Battiss's short notes or (unpublished) lectures—and by

myself.

Mr. Brodrick describes the different phases distinguishable (except the south-east African one)—the recent levels (those of the hunters, the Bushmen who became cattle-stealers—from Bantus or Europeans—and who depicted their battles with their neighbours) and the older very long phase, where, mixed with the polychrome elands² (or even older than these) we can see strangers of different types. Lastly there is one phase (or several phases)—best represented in Southern Rhodesia or in South-West Africa—of lately discovered line drawings of very large animals.

As to the social reasons for this artistic production, the author cites and quotes Frobenius both as regards hunting-magic for the increase of game and as regards "rain-making" necessary for the people's existence.³ The rain-making is associated sometimes with human sacrifice, even that of royal personages. We must also recognize, it seems to me, that an important place in the African paintings was reserved for "historical" pictures (i.e. those of migrations, battles with other peoples, cattle thefts, feasts and fruitful hunting) and for simple episodes such as courting, quarrels, reconciliations, initiations, social relationships and

¹ Ivory can only have been sought in Africa or Siberia. The Asiatic elephant is too poor in ivory.

² These, as Frobenius suggested, may be semi-domesticated South African.
³ The similar signification of certain Australian paintings from the north-west of the continent (recent or modern) to which the author devotes only a few lines, allows him to present several very fine photographs to which he adds, almost without comment, some of Indian rock-paintings. He is quite right to reject the statement that one of these latter represents a kangaroo (without a tail!). The legend of this (invisible) "kangaroo" originated in a little book where some deplorable copies of figures at Cogul and Altamira are presented as Indian!

contacts, all of which are well represented in Tassili and in South-West Africa. It was not for nothing that Frobenius spoke about the "painted rock archives" of ancient African history.

But if art was to exist among the "primitive" populations and in the world of long-ago, it had to embody the essential preoccupations of hunters and shepherds-hunting-magic, multiplication of game and rain-making—as later it embodied the hope of a future life and the cult of the dead both in Egypt and in the ancient and mediaeval Christian world. But these considerations do not explain either the birth of figurative art "from the void" or the cult of Beauty for itself. "Art for Art's sake" would of itself have provided no living for the artists, but though they placed their powers at the service of Magic and Religion, the artists were never prevented from enjoying their own creations, nor were the contemporaries of the artists prevented from enjoying the artists' work. Thus the artists produced beautiful things which, because of their beauty, stir us still. There had to exist a hidden spring of intense visual emotion before the powerful and plastic paintings (evoked by the dangers of big game hunting) could be so enriched.

The same or similar peoples who lived however on the seashores and fed on shell-fish produced no art comparable with that of the big game hunters, but only left behind them diagrammatic figures which increased in number and variety among the peoples who derived most of their subsistence from the practice of *incipient* agriculture. These men prepared, all unconsciously, the advent of Writing.

The illustrations in *Prehistoric Painting* are, with two exceptions, excellent. But the "bear" of Combarelles (p. 24) is very poor indeed. Moreover, instead of reproducing (p. 46) the "Lady of Brandberg" from the sketch¹ of Maack (its discoverer) Mr. Brodrick would have done better to have used the more accurate

This sketch revealed to me both the site itself and the existence in south-west Africa of an art very superior to that of the Bushmen. It is an art of a red-haired people (of Semitic profile) who painted hundreds of rock-shelters. The picture of the "White Lady" in the Tsibab Ravine of the Brandberg appears to be this art's crowning glory. The idea that the "White Lady" represents a "missionary's wife" (a theory referred to, in passing, by the author) is, of course, to be classed with the attribution of the Altamira paintings to the Spanish Jesuits or of the pictures in the Font-de-Gaume and Combarelles caves to deserters and rebels in French First Empire times!

drawing made by Miss von Weyersberg and reproduced in Frobenius's Matzimu Dsangara (Vol. II).

It is my sincere hope that this little book, a work of real educative value, may reveal to a wide public something of the thrilling subject of Prehistoric Art. Let us hope, also, that Mr. Brodrick's volume may induce some to devote their lives to carrying on the labours of a generation of men now passing away but who have had the satisfaction both of discovering and of studying this art.

Perhaps the reader will forgive me if I have lingered a little over the memory of the days of discovery, since during a period of fifty years I have lived through all the phases of an enthralling revelation. I have spent a very long time in the caves and at the painted rocks passed in review by the author.

A father, however, should not be asked to speak of his own children even if it is to thank Mr. Brodrick for having said so much in praise of them.

STRAVINSKY'S MASS

By

EDMUND RUBBRA

Acceptation of an American magazine, Caecilia (described as a "Catholic Review of Musical Art"), contained an interesting article by Dr. Lieberson on "The Problem of Modernization of Liturgical Music." In it the author discusses how far modern findings in harmony can be incorporated in liturgical music, and although he reaches no very definite conclusions in the matter, he seems to be in sympathy with a widening of the vocabulary to include atonal, paratonal and polytonal systems. As if in answer to this worrying problem comes the publication of Stravinsky's new Mass for mixed chorus and double wind quintet, a work that will probably cause a repetition of the controversy that has accompanied most

¹ Miniature Score (Boosey & Hawkes, 5s.).

of Stravinsky's work from Le Sacre du Printemps onwards. There is no indication in the score of the Mass as to whether Stravinsky intends it to be used liturgically, but I presume this is so for two reasons: first, the shortness of each movement (the whole work lasts only seventeen minutes), and second, the presence of the plain-song introduction to the Creed ("Credo in unum Deum") marked to be intoned by the priest. Its liturgical intentions are, then, fairly obvious, yet against this one can set two factors that seem to point in the other, more secular, direction: namely, the use of a mixed chorus (although there seems to be a contradiction here, as the title specifies "mixed chorus" while a footnote to the first page of the miniature score says "children's voices should be employed") and instruments to accompany it. The two latter factors can, however, be viewed as a widening of the hitherto narrow scope (in texture, style and timbre) of traditional liturgical music, and do not necessarily affect the appropriateness of the music as an aid to devotion.

In the Encyclical Mediator Dei (1947) it is stated, with reference to this problem of modern music, that "it cannot be maintained that modern music and singing are to be completely barred from Catholic worship. On the contrary, they are certainly to be admitted to our churches, so long as they are free from a worldly spirit or anything unbefitting the sacred character of the place and the liturgical functions, and so long as they are not inspired by a meaningless striving after extraordinary effects. Under these conditions they can contribute greatly to the splendour of the sacred rites, help to elevate the minds of the hearers and foster their true devotion." This pronouncement makes it clear that modern liturgical music is open to criticism from two sides, according to whether it is viewed as music, pure and simple, or as an integral part of the liturgy. To satisfy both sides is peculiarly difficult for the modern composer, for there is now no widelydiffused "liturgical style" comparable to that of the sixteenth century, and if he is to forge a new one he runs the risk of making it too personal to be universally accepted. In the best liturgical music the personal and impersonal elements are evenly balanced and so interfused that although the personality of the composer naturally gives its own form and warmth to the music—otherwise one could not distinguish between Byrd, Palestrina and Vittoria yet impersonal (or, perhaps, supra-personal?) devotional needs

put a brake upon the expression of purely human desires. Thus poised, the music adds beauty to the liturgy without awakening tensions and controversies in the heart and mind of the listener.

But it is important to remember that this poise was not gained by self-conscious effort, but was the mirror of the composer's unconditional and unquestioning acceptance of the body of traditional doctrine handed down by the Church, and, as part of this tradition was the Gregorian chant, the task of the sixteenth century composer was, in his liturgical music, to express the same principles through a polyphonic texture. There was, therefore, no cleavage between modernity and tradition. When music broke away from this tradition to become an art of personal expression, its horizons certainly widened, but as they widened so the traditional centre dissolved. With its complete loss, the twentieth century witnessed a series of self-enclosed musical microcosms each turning in its own orbit: atonality (in reality, decadent Wagnerism in its emotional aspect), neo-classicism (a working in idioms no longer "natural"), impressionism, polytonality (a misnomer, for the ear accepts wholes and not segments), and various forms of contrapuntal systems, each with duly formulated rules. Stravinsky has always been a seeker somewhat outside all these different "schools": he has never settled into a niche convenient for labelling, but has been an errant wanderer through the ages, assuming the disguise (never a perfect one) of Bach, Pergolesi, or even Tchaikovski. In the new Mass he seems to have borrowed the mediaeval costumes of Jacopo da Bologna or Matheus de Perusio, fourteenth century composers whose freedom of polyphonic speech plus the accompanimental use of odd wind instruments would make a special appeal to him. To go back thus far to forms and textures upon which he could model his musical speech was a very logical thing for Stravinsky to do, for in many ways the musical situation in the present century is akin to that of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: then, as now, experimental methods prevailed, and style was not consolidated enough for rules to be deduced from it. The lines of the music were rhythmically free, melismatic and often highly florid, their contrapuntal combination seemed to be independent and to follow no fixed procedures, and the tonal focus lay primarily in the slower-moving instrumental part. Listening to these early motets by means of recorded performances that

approximate, as far as modern scholarship can determine, to the intended sound of the originals, we are struck particularly by one thing: their seeming inappropriateness in the Mass. That intrusive trombone part, the ornate vocal writing: are they not disturbing elements in what should be an atmosphere of concentrated devotion? Yet are we not judging this music from the point of view of the settled traditional polyphony of the sixteenth century, which is so strong as to blot out all other forms of liturgical music? And in so doing, are we not being unhistorical in judging earlier by later standards? for it is quite possible—although documentary proof is not available—that contemporary ears found thirteenth and fourteenth century music for the Mass liturgical, and in no sense disturbing.

Stravinsky carries many stages further these early procedures, and we must keep an open mind as to their appropriateness. If I say I am disturbed by it as I am disturbed by pre-fifteenth century liturgical music, that is perhaps only an admission that the golden age of polyphony is blocking a wider view. But there is no doubt of its technical and musical fascination, and it is this element that enters largely into my appreciation of Stravinsky's new work.

My immediate reaction after hearing the recent first performance of this work (broadcast from La Scala, Milan—a strangely inappropriate place!) was that Stravinsky had deliberately made up his mind to flout all accepted conventions, and to write a Mass that at no point would use or touch them. The word setting in its accentuations seemed odd:

(7555|J55|JJJ|555|5J.) $vi-si-bi-lium\ om-ni-um\ et\ in-vi-si-bi-li-um$

the wind instruments that accompanied it (oboes, cor anglais, bassoons, trumpets, trombones) seemed to be chosen in order to avoid anything in the nature of sweetness, the rhythmic characteristics seemed often to have more affinity to the music of such ballets as Les Noces than to the relatively accentless liturgical music one was familiar with, and the accompaniment itself was so independent of anything in the voice parts (not, however, in the normal polyphonic sense) that the ear felt it at first as an intrusion rather than as an intrinsic part of the whole web of sound. One thing only connected it with traditional church

music: the general diatonicism of the writing. But it is a diatonicism that cares little for the accepted codes of concordance.

Only deeper study of the score could determine whether these oddities were the result of mere perversity, or were the visible sign of an intensely original approach that would need patient study in order to understand it. This study I have now been able to give to the work, but only time will verify my conclusions.

First of all, I feel that the genesis of the work lies more in the apprehension of the fascinating problems of timbre and texture raised by the words and form of the Mass than in any deeply-felt desire to clothe them with music of an equal spirituality. Stravinsky has always taken an almost mathematical interest in the spacing and layout of his tonal colours, and it is obvious that here the Latin text, apart from its meaning, is almost treated as a line of music in itself. This accounts probably for the above-mentioned unconventional accentuations, and for the strange intrusions, in the Credo, of accompanimental sounds that seem to have no textual relevance, if one concentrates upon meaning. There is admirable diversity in the scoring of the successive movements: the massive, somewhat slow-moving harmonies of the Kyrie are followed by a Gloria whose ornate and decorative polyphony is a foil for the impressive, speech-like Credo, that eschews all polyphony, alike in voices and accompaniment, until the beautiful unaccompanied "Amen," written in starkly modal terms. The Sanctus and Benedictus carry the melismatic speech of the Gloria still further, each syllable of each word being accented by what are in effect appoggiaturas followed by longer held notes. This creates a distinct illusion of bells, particularly when the whole choir is employed. The Agnus Dei looks like a piece of stark sixteenth century counterpoint, but there are queer distortions in it, and it follows wayward harmonic paths the clues to which are hidden.

Without music type it is not possible to analyse further this most interesting work, but sufficient has, I think, been said to indicate its viewpoint. Whether it is a lasting contribution to the corpus of liturgical music it is impossible to say, but at any rate it is an original one. The listener must judge whether this originality is inspired, in the words of the Encyclical, "by a meaningless striving after extraordinary effects," or by a true

desire to give new form and meaning to ageless words.

POOR FOOLS'

(Translated from the French of Georges Bernanos)

I

OME time ago I wrote that the wrath of fools would fill the world to the brim, and indeed, the world is now brim-full. I was wrong in this only—I talked of fools as though I were what they call a clever person. I was the more gravely wrong because I have never dreamed of sacrificing the common mass of fools to the fratricidal hatred of what, to my mind, is left as the ultimate dregs of that strange, irreducible, unconquerable people —its dregs, or should I say its idle iridescent scum consisting of sophisticated, cultivated fools, fools de luxe: these are but degenerate fools! Fools, taken in the mass, seem to me rather a victim-species; and folly, as a natural defence-reaction to be compared with that scaly carapace that develops on the backs of over-whacked asses. From one generation to another, fools have accustomed themselves to understand everything awry or indeed to understand nothing at all. The first lot of fools were perhaps satisfied with just pretending to be so; the earliest fools perhaps just acted as if they believed everything said to them by the Powerful, the Upright and the Pure: their successors ended by actually believing it: they decided to accept, blindly, as sincere, truthful, pious and just, anyone who officially declared that he was so: they decided not to change their views unless authorized to do so-improbable event!-by the very people concerned, who should certify in presence of a notary that they are not sincere, or truthful, or pious or righteous. That would simplify things quite a lot!

I am speaking of fools, not idiots or cretins or madmen. The world of the cretin, the idiot or the lunatic is a haggard creation, in which truth may indeed—accidentally—exist. But truth is never found in the fool's world because there, once the first principles have been laid down, the rest is deduced like any rigid theorem. The fool's world is always logical; the fool, always a

Pages from a diary written in Brazil in 1940, forming part of Les Enfants Humiliés.

logician; a fool's argumentation is one of the very toughest. No one finds himself more totally disarmed in the presence of the fool than the worldly-wise: the wisdom of this world—sapientia mundi—was invented to exploit the fool but is absolutely unable to convince him; it would be all too easy for the fool to turn its own arguments against that worldly-wisdom—to take it literally. I have always thought that the enfant terrible and the fool were one and the same creature, whose true name—whose sacred name—we shall not learn till later. No one save God has ever spoken to that child in his own language. No logic save that of the Gospel is able to shatter the fool's logic like so much glass, and make him come out—a living being!—from his coatarmour.

The cretin, the lunatic, the idiot all belong to God: we can assume that He willed them to be like that, and that these unfortunates glorify Him after their kind. But the fool is the work of your hands, the creation of Society, or at least so successful a deformation of a man as to look like a creation. To understand the position of the fool in the society that simultaneously exploits him and protects him, ensures to him more than security itself that relentless fidelity to external forms which turn a Bouvard and a Pécuchet into a monstrous version of stoics and saints one must reflect on the position of the bigot among Christians. Yes—"bigot." Fr. Cordovani himself knows quite well what a bigot is. He would be merely pretending if he identified him with the simple pious man. There is a human element in the Church; therefore there will be scandals, stumbling-blocks, and this element of scandal needs to be surmounted. God demands it from us. But the bigot, like the fool, prefers being drugged to being shocked. Before treating such people as cowards, one would have to know whether they were being tried beyond their strength. Neither overt injustice, nor criminal cynicism provide a justifiable excuse for the multiplication of fools. That sort of "scandal" provokes indignation or disgust, creates revolutionaries or victims, well aware of their wretchedness. Having been cheated is what poisons their very blood. Some time or other we have all experienced that deep wound, that dull intimate pain, that agonizing shudder at the very roots of our human life, that racking of the soul. It is possible, even probable, that our Lord Himself experienced it. The maledictions

hurled at the Pharisees have a unique ring of anger and of agony; they suggest a sort of intolerable amazement. We can easily appreciate the attitude of fools when confronted with certain really torturing forms of hypocrisy. These unhappy men prefer to accept everything in the lump, which really is a way of rejecting everything in toto. They are like the hero of Léon Bloy—they no longer want to know anything. They take refuge in the "letter"—I grant you that. But listen, listen, and remember what I shall say—they do so, because you have hunted them out of the "spirit."

I spoke above of the fools' serenity. And it is true that it strains our patience not a little. Never mind. At present I am trying to see more clearly into that. I ask myself what it has cost, throughout the centuries, to fashion that sense of security; at the price of what disillusionments and what innumerable humiliations, swallowed down in helplessness and silence, has gradually been formed the preposterous pride, the ridiculous respectability, of that race worn down by scandals, slowly educated up to its function of expiating—a race not only resigned, but unconscious—for the Pharisee's heart is very susceptible. The Pharisee doesn't like seeing men weep. The fool expiates for the Pharisee as the poor man does for the rich. Here are facts that we shall understand better later on.

I've never been a great diner-out. But I've been out enough to notice that clever people, when by some chance they all stop talking at the same time, look just like fools. Now am I going to feel sorry for them too? Such people call themselves sceptics, and, my word! they genuinely think they are. Yet they are quite unsceptical about their scepticism. Every day they discover yet again that they had been fooled the day before and hadn't at all foreseen that they would be fooled next day too. Well, it would have ruined their enjoyment. For every one louse that they crush with their shining manicured finger-nails, twenty new ones are born in their scented locks. In a word, the average fool lives at peace among his lice, whereas the sceptic scratches himself all the while. That is probably because he has very little else to do.

The Pharisee has nothing to fear from their grimaces and in fact he doesn't fear them. Not that he treats them gently. Why should he? They know his secret! But the common herd of fools

knows nothing about it; or, if once they knew it, they have deliberately forgotten it and buried it in the lowest depths of their collective memory along with the woes and miseries suffered of old by their ancestors when those wretched creatures still clung to the two ends of their chain, spread-eagled between Yes and No, thesis and hypothesis, principle and practice, relative and absolute. Fools will stand firm to the end for a conception of the world, of society, or life, which dispenses them from judging or from choosing. But afterwards? Well, I am telling you that the anger of fools will fill the world; and the Pharisees' civilization, that monstrous daughter of a mis-carried Christianity, will have worked out its doom.

I perfectly well realize that these new digressions about the fool are capable of boring my readers to death. The first chapter of Les Grands Cimetières, on the same subject, didn't succeed in pleasing very many. I can't help it. I do my best. It's not my fault—I am trying to understand! As by now you've certainly realized, I don't distinguish myself very clearly from the common herd, and, if I'm to tell the truth, I prefer being so. I started by approaching the fools rather as society ladies go to meet the common folk, but that's over now. I no more see myself as having to go. It has become so natural to me to go that I sometimes find myself among them without knowing how I got there, emptyhanded. Once upon a time, reading the newspapers gave me that pang at heart, that twitch in the pit of the stomach that good old Drumont innocently imagined was a liver-attack. I now never argue with the liar: I don't even listen to him: I watch him. On the outer side of the gigantic illuminated plate-glass, I've taken my old place among the loungers. All the same, I am not so very comfortable, any more than the cripples who surround me; but it's because I'm cold, and I'm inclined to snatch with both hands at the bowl reached out to me, saying to myself that it can't matter: what difference can it make? At least it'll warm me up a bit.

I myself have never had much luck with my landlords, though for years and years the conscience of Frenchmen has been trying to solve the housing problem. Since Munich, I've lived in one furnished room after another, and now I'm on the street. Every letter I get—but they aren't many—brings the same story: "We've got nothing to say. We're no wiser than you." Is that

true? Do they too belong to crippledom? Do we all sleep under the bridges? For one part of me has remained the other side of the water: I think about it: I think about me. I think of that forlorn creature as of some distant relative. It has become far stranger to me than the child from whom, all the same, we both descend-more of a stranger than my childhood. I ask myself what that vagabond is doing over there. His friends and mine are no more quite the same: yet at least his friends have never loved me save because of me, for it is not he who signs my books, though they reflect his likeness on every page, as in some shop-window, his harassed likeness. They would certainly not recognize him; it isn't sure that they so much as meet him. They surely cannot haunt the self-same lonely pavements. So let them beware of hunting for him! As for me, there's nothing I regret. Even if we had to die, he and I, each on his side of the water, there's nothing I'd regret. After the passing of so many years, there was nothing much left to say to one another, and since it was always he who kept annoyances to himself, it is I who have gone away. God bless him! We fought the other war together; this one, we could not. I didn't find much to feed me in that first one-but this one! Upon my word, there's not enough for two.

I see no use in explaining my ideas upon this topic any more fully. If my view is right, all that seems obscure in this book will clear itself up sooner or later. And besides, do I really see anything? I vaguely foresee future disillusionments because I've had my fill of disillusionment, and, like other poor devils of my species, almost always in the same part of me, and that part of my soul has become sensitive—it tells me beforehand when the weather is going to change. If I were less naïve, I should blush at so cheap a kind of foresight—it hardly deserves even the name of foresight. The sharper-witted foresee when a tile will fall, but are unconscious that an earthquake is on the way. Such foresight is de luxe; it is quite useless, just as they are themselves. Clever folk suffer only after they've understood: we poor devils suffer without understanding; and when the clever folk are just beginning to understand, those poor devils have already been suffering far too long, and now must begin all over again.

Poverty has always overwhelmed me with kindnesses—not that I failed, for a time, to misunderstand their value, for obviously I can't flatter myself that my heart is as magnanimous as hers is. But what I love in her is her charity, her tender insight, her delicate concern for me. If, for example, she has so far deprived me of those magic boxes, I'm almost ashamed to mention it because they're to be found in many a home far more povertystricken than mine is. No matter. Poverty decided that so it was to be-not just anyone's Poverty, but mine, chosen for me, to whom I've been once and for all entrusted, and who will be responsible for my life-story. For each "poor" man has his own special poverty made to his image and likeness, his angelguardian, the angelic Minister of Lady Poverty herself. I take it for granted that you don't imagine that I lay claim to have been given the one that was received by Francis of Assisi! My Poverty, clearly, is on much more modest a footing; but just because of that she and I are at precisely the same level; we generally end by understanding one another. She keeps pretending that she exacts nothing from me: she doesn't even ask for much: she gets what she wants by enchanting but infallible devices: she doesn't strip me bare, but she tricks me quietly, and when she sees that I'm annoyed she slips a trump-card into my game which is all the easier for her since she has them all up her sleeve. In short, poverty has imposed many fewer hardships upon me than are the blunders she has saved me from; and if the poor—I mean, definitely, the poor and not the destitute, alas—would only be sincere, they would recognize as I do that their Poverty has behaved to them just as she has to me and that she is the wonderfully gracious dispenser not of their livelihood only, but their lives.

But, say you, you couldn't care less whether I am rich or poor; you aren't in the least concerned about it. Well, no doubt it isn't a subject that one readily embarks upon—over there, in Europe: but then, forgive me, I'm no more in Europe, and I no more feel forced to respect your sense of decency. Besides, your and my sense of decency don't coincide. Once I feel drawn to sympathize with someone unknown to me, I feel just as pleased

Wireless-sets, mentioned earlier in this diary. Tr.

at discovering that he is poor as that he is well born—well bred—yes, I feel just as pleased. I fear you must think me very absurd! No matter. If but I could—even at the cost of seeming absurd—myself supply just that same pleasure to a few readers whose names I shall never know! I am not hostile to extreme opulence, because it can weigh just as heavily on men as a famous name can: I admire those who are not crushed by it; and I am sorry for the others, who were not born for so great a venture. What disgusts me is precisely what you, all of you, are praying for, what you are so proud of, "comfortableness," being comfortable, sitting easy. Ah! that's just what I wanted to come to: you never do sit easy except when you are easing yourselves!

I like being witness in my own favour to this extent—I have never tried to "sit pretty" in my books, and, on their side, my books have never helped me to sit pretty. I can say that without any bitterness, for, as a writer, I haven't had the honour of being disregarded; my books sell . . . which proves that a great number of people read them without understanding them, or, alas, may buy them and not read them. My books sell well; but the public unfortunately doesn't know that large editions do not make us rich: they bring us notoriety, and therewith the means of getting rich if we use profit-making tricks in which literature serves no more for anything but a pretext for our real

self which is far away.

I can't help it. I have often talked about poverty and have struggled to do so without loss of dignity: I would be really too ashamed if you could for one moment imagine that I passed judgment on her from afar, as a pass-time, out of curiosity, after the fashion of a young Bourget studying high society thanks to a generous tip slipped into the butler's hand. . . . But you would be losing your time if you were sorry for me; I don't deserve that people should be sorry for me. I "went through" poverty just as I "went through" the war, in quite the humblest rank: in the army of the poor, as in the other one, I never got beyond being corporal. Or, if you prefer, in the world's most ancient aristocracy, that whose high Commander is Jesus Christ, and St. Francis of Assisi its Grand Constable, I am no more than the smallest of esquires. No matter! No matter! That is quite enough to make me humbly feel that my own honour is bound up with that of the poor. You'd never guess how important this point is

in Christian eyes! For thus we are thousands and thousands all the world over who dare to turn our pedigree to our advantage —not very often, if only out of respect for our illustrious cousins the Princes of the Blood of Poverty, the great Lords of Destitution -but none the less we try to be decently true to our Order's holy Rule. We live by our work and not on its piled-up interest; we live and we work from one day to the next; our work and our life are one and the self-same bread—panem quotidianum. Despite the famous axiom that one should always have money in front of one, we have never allowed that sly and disobedient lackey to step ahead of us; money has always been behind us alas, sometimes very far behind, so far behind that we had sadly to sit down, along with our wife and our brats, very anxioushearted, waiting for it to catch up with us. These trials are but small ones, I agree: they aren't beyond our powers: but neither are they essentially different from those that our Masters must face up to: but thanks to them, we don't climb down; we don't sink back into the common crowd. No doubt you may say that we are poor merely by accident. What then? Does one choose one's own descent? What else has a prince to do, in order to be a prince, than to be born? We have taken no vow of poverty, like so many very comfortable Religious; it was God Himself who made that vow on our behalf; and if we play false to it, He keeps it in our stead; He remains poor in order to keep us poor; His hands were pierced so that we shouldn't be able to keep anything in ours. We are poor as kings are rightfully kings—by the sole Grace of God.

I've written "we," and I ask myself if I still have a claim to write it. In this barren forest, where there are more snakes than song-birds, in this mighty lair of beasts, the word poverty has lost its pristine meaning—that sweet significance we used once to give to it. Poverty here is but a sickness that kills men in the depths of their loneliness—as dysentry does, or typhus, or malaria. Ah for my old towns! my human towns!

Possibly, without realizing it, I am self-exiled from poverty: if so, I have but the better right to be listened to when I talk of my companions of old, our long-ago fraternity. I say that the world will be saved by the Poor, and precisely by that sort of poor men whom modern society is eliminating without annihilating them, because they are no more capable of adapting themselves

to her than she of assimilating them . . . until, until, their naïve patience shall sooner or later get the better of her ferocity. I say it will be the poor who save the world, and they will save it without meaning to, they will save it in spite of themselves, they will ask nothing in exchange for they will have no idea of the value of the service they will have rendered: they will put through this colossal piece of business and naturally make not one halfpenny off it for themselves. They will seem to be bargaining with the chemist, the baker, the confectioner, the landlord—to be getting the correct answer to their portentous calculations, ceaselessly to hunt after the solution of problems more complicated than the squaring of the circle—the discovery of clothes that keep pace with the growth of the boy who wears them, shoes that don't wear out, sleeves that don't get holes at the elbow, the far too cheap panacean liquid that cures bronchitis, angina, scarlet fever, measles, and is as useful for a baby's gums as for its grandpapa's rheumatism. They try hard to reflect upon such problems, night and day; but, while feeling they have solved them, they are really spending their time imagining they are solved; dreaming that they pay their debts, that they are stepping out, as they say, with a fair field before them. Unluckily, that is what they never have. If, by some miracle, they did pay their debts, they wouldn't be one inch further forward. For never, never, will they realize one elementary truth—too obvious to be seen-namely, that it is far, far easier to earn a pound than to save a penny; that within their home they expend more skill in balancing their impossible budgets on a pin-point than would be required to become a millionaire; that money comes to him who takes it—whereas they attribute to Money preferences and whims that exist only in themselves—like schoolboys making sheep'seyes from a distance at a barmaid instead of giving her a good pinch behind. They don't want money for to-day, for right now-they hope for it to-morrow, or the day after to-morrow, or next Sunday, for it's their hope that they're in love with and which makes life so dear to them—that life whose appalling complication is not so much as guessed by them—its meticulous, interminable torment.

Hope—that is the word I was wanting to write! The rest of the world wants, covets, claims, exacts, and it calls all that "hoping"; since it can be neither patient nor honourable, all it

asks is pleasure, and pleasure in the true sense of the word can't wait: having to wait for pleasure can't be called hope: it would be more like delirium, a death-agony. Anyhow the world is living much too fast; it hasn't time, now, for hope. The inner life of the modern man has much too swift a rhythm for the formation and ripening of so warm and so tender an experience. He shrugs his shoulders at the very idea of that chaste espousal to the Future. . . . William of Orange's view that you needn't hope before starting on some enterprise is a thousand times more true than that great man doubtless thought it was. Hope is too sweet a food for the ambitious man: it might risk softening his heart. The modern world has no time for hoping, or loving, or dreaming. The poor are those who do its hoping for it, just as the Saints love and expiate in our stead. The tradition of humble hope is in the hands of the poor, just as certain old women keep the secret of special details of lace-making that machinery will never succeed in imitating. You may tell me that those poor devils cannot but live on hope; they have no more merit in hoping than in living at all. Oh—no doubt! I shall even add that the harder life becomes for them, the more they must hope as sheer compensation. Do you imagine that the work of those diligent silent bees—the honey that overflows from their hives must be for ever lost? Naturally, no one ever asks that question, because the earth still belongs to polytechnician dolts: but the day will come—No! hasn't it come already? don't you feel on your forehead, on your hands, the first freshness of the dawn? anyway, the day will come when those who to-day are running -hallucinated-behind their pitiless masters, their savage masters who toss away human life as stuff without value, who cram their forges and furnaces with that human life—will stop, exhausted, on that road that leads to nowhere. And then, perhaps-but what's the good of saying it?—the word of the Lord will be fulfilled and the meek will possess the land simply because they have not lost the habit of hope, though the world despairs around them. They will possess the land, but not for long; they will have possessed it, and maybe not so much as have noticed it; yet their innocent weight will have tilted the scales, and upset the equilibrium of the world. Big words, say you? Well, listen carefully—they are not big enough! You fancy yourselves the lords of world-opinion, but you have done no more than explore

what lay readiest to your eye; you are lords of world-opinion like Christopher Columbus, who, disembarking at the Bahamas, fancied he was lord of all the Indies. . . . And besides, forgive my mentioning it, your colossal publicity machine has, during the first years of its being set in motion, done no more than set opinion astir, agitate it, churn it up. You have summoned the peoples to Profit as to-day you summon them to War: the greedier swarm around you, eager for their prey; their grimacing, gesticulating throngs hide the horizon from you; their yells have filled, smothered, submerged the silence of millions of men. But now you have to act! You have promised the liquidation of a society whose reserves, in any case, you were impudently squandering; and idiots still go on calculating what they will gain from such a proceeding, whereas you know already that it will leave you with nothing but enormous liabilities. So you will have to create. We have seen you proud of a philosophy—that philosophy which grants to these two-legged creatures, men, one only incentive, profit; one only god, pleasure; one only mysticism, instinct. Experience is going to tell us what all that's worth. Please make sure of understanding me. Don't think I'm joking. You have been able to demolish a society; but you will never build up another with that sort of men. Construction is always the work of love. So sooner or later you will have to appeal to a human nature that you understand very ill; that indeed you refuse to recognize because its existence would ruin your own theses—a non-realist humanity, in the sense that you give to that word. A different humanity, a different sort of men, who, you imagine, never make any demands, simply because they don't need the same things that you do. Perhaps they will, in fact, make no demands or put their complaints into words—certainly they will take no revenge. But you will never come to the end of their patience, their holy patience. All that you have knocked down, they will build up when your back is turned—once, thrice, a hundred times will they tirelessly pick up all that you have allowed to fall, and will put it back, with a smile, into your hands. The picture of life that you have made for yourselves has become so gross without your noticing it, that you fancy the secret of domination to reside in violence, whereas experience shows daily that humble human patience is what through thousands and thousands of years has put a curb on the haggard

forces of mere Nature. You will never get the better of the poor

man's patience: patientia pauperum non peribit in finem.

If I really knew for whom I'm talking like this, I wouldn't dare to go on. But I know less and less for whom I used to talk -for whom I'm talking now: I talk stammeringly-no one's grin can disconcert me any more! Moreover, I don't at all want to stir anyone's emotions. I fear we are already very far from sympathetic tears: we're all of us in the fierce and fiery furnace, and that's not the right temperature for distilling tears. I've never wanted to make you take pity on the poor; and I fear that this chapter may be but one more misunderstanding between you and me. For we aren't talking about the same "poor." The poor whom you're accustomed to see—that is, the ones whom one finds without having to look for them—are as a rule, if not falsely called poor, at any rate inadequately poor, unsuccessfully poor, little worthy of their great name. . . . They are obsessed, needy but homesick for money, attracted by other people's money as moths by the flame, unlucky persons whom chance could turn, in a moment, into rich and worthless men, boobies whose flighty wits have made them tumble off their pinnacle of wealth into destitution and who crawl around at the bottom of their slope like wood-lice at the bottom of a bottle. In the huge procession of the Rich, all such men are not unlike those scoundrels in the army of old, who trudge along in the rear but have a knife in their sock, and when the real soldiers have done their bit, they often finish off the wounded and promptly rob the dead. . . . The truly poor avoid the rich; the truly poor live together, help one another, die together—and that indeed is the secret sign of a vocation to poverty. If the true poor don't become rich, that isn't because they are too stupid (though they often manage to think so themselves!) but because they don't want to enough. You see? They are antipathetic to the "accursed greed for gold" as others are to tuberculosis, and as a rule without ever suspecting it, for they readily imagine that, like everyone else, they think of nothing but money, and they take no account of the time they spend upon other things. They are not rich, because God doesn't choose that they should be rich; He has signed them with His seal; He has elected them to be His own poor men, and that is a favour which He refuses to many a good Religious puffed up with his own importance, very proud of having swapped a

probable destiny of incurable penury, of being fathers of families harassed by tradesmen—a dog's life, in short—for a comfortable existence disburdened of all material worries. There are so many Reverend Fathers who, under pretext of serving the interests of

the community, simply pool their own avarice.

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When I foretell the Advent of the Poor, I show no special clairvoyance. In a distressful society, a society fallen back into ruins, it is only natural that those who are best adapted to distress should profit by certain advantages. As everyone knows, there is nothing stupider than a rich man who is not only ruined, but made incapable by circumstances ever to regain what he has lost, to "build himself up again," as he says. A creature in process of "building himself up again" is hardly a living thing at all—he is a shapeless thing, hardly a silkworm in its cocoon. He is, for a while, off the map. But when I say that this triumph of the poor will be short-lived, I am no less certain I am right; for much as I love the poor, I am well aware that it has not been granted to them to dominate, to be top dogs: their order and their justice are not of this world; the role of the poor in human society is more like the wife's role in the family, or rather, that of those old kinswomen who never married, but who at times incarnate the honour and true prosperity of the house, and moreover expiate the faults of the others, only to die feeling very sorry that they have been a burden upon everyone.

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When night comes down on this tropical country, that has had so little contact with human beings, a country without a past, without memories, and so barren too under its relentless sun; worn to the bone, to its skeleton of iron, by its fantastic vegetation, misshapen and tetanus-racked, its heart eaten out by ants and spiky grasses and pale anaemic flowers—a land worn out though never worked—I begin to wonder whether I have not indeed crossed the borders of a solitude from which there is no returning. Then a wind begins to blow, from nowhere, out of the blue, an utter stranger in the land, and the leaves reply with metallic clacking, and the gilded toads with a sharp, scarcely audible spasm of their glassy throats. It suddenly strikes me that there is a way out of all solitude, but it always lies just ahead;

you have got to go through solitude as through the night till morning comes. It's only a trick, a mirage, if every step towards those who are waiting for me seems to take me still farther from them. What difference does it make where I watch them from? Of all the senses sight is the least reliable. Sooner or later I shall come across them just where they are; we shall all be exactly where we think we are—that will be the wonder of it.

Every night when I shut my note-book I resolve never to open it again, for a long time at any rate. And every morning I come back to my seat in the little patch of shade cast by the wall, under a withered mango-tree, with its fruit hanging from long dead stalks and falling and bouncing on the hard earth one by one. Facing me is another wall, mottled with still blotches of light, flaked and filed and scraped bare by the sun; covered with the heat-scurf that for me will always be the symbol, almost the

abstract symbol, of utter, incurable, hopeless misery.

At the bottom of the sixty-foot courtyard the heat settles like stagnant water, layer on layer, hotter or cooler, and the wind shifts it slowly and feebly on to the glaring road down which it rolls in a stream of sweltering air to the river. A new-fallen leaf crackles like brittle glass in my hand; and by the end of the day it will be in pieces with everything else that is lying about. Everything is reduced by the sun to the same dead level, a grim, colourless, scentless refuse, more depressing than anything rain, snow or mud can do. It transforms into a solitude a bit of mean soil, a little leprous courtyard open to an unyielding sky (which, all the same, turns suddenly green at nightfall), as though the unchanging light and heat kept life at a still point, in a strange equilibrium, creating the illusion—or perhaps the reality—of silence, even when all the time—as usual, as always, reader! the house behind me rings with shouts and quarrels and abuse in three languages, answered gravely by the eccentric macaws, those great clowns in yellow, blue, scarlet and Veronese-green; while the black, scaly-headed urubus, and the griffin-vultures that are as much part of the domestic scene as hens, trip over their own feet in their nervous caperings. I draw the table towards me and wedge myself in my chair against the wall, for I know this bit of shade is barely enough, and that I shall soon have to change it for a less healthy patch, with holes like a skimmer, under the tree. I did not choose the spot, and I was not forced there either;

quite simply, I find it easy to shuffle there on my two sticks. I can move no further now.

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Where am I to go? All that matters at my age is not to go back. God knows I'm not writing from vainglory. I am scared at the thought of retreating, not indignant. If I am walking to my end, like everyone else, my face is turned towards something that is only beginning, that never stops beginning, that begins and never stops again: towards victory. Each step back would bring me nearer to death, or rather to something that I should not call by that name, to the only kind of death a free man could fear, to a death whose chains Christ has broken—the fatefulness of lives that have failed and are lost, destiny, fatum, all the fatalities together: those of race, blood, habit, of our mistakes and sins, a fate no one escapes except by pushing ahead. I have not pushed ahead more than others, but I have never deceived myself that I have reached my destination. Perhaps I am further away than I think. But now, wedged in between the table and the wall I can be sure of not retreating an inch. Now with nothing better to do I stretch for my note-book; there is nothing else I can lay hold of-nothing except emptiness. What I put down yesterday was no use, I suppose, but to-day I can only carry on as I started. Anywhere else, except in this country which is so totally foreign to my soul, I would have been tempted to put things off till to-morrow. But my exile is too recent: I have not yet succeeded in discovering a new to-morrow. Shall I ever? Can I? Is a to-morrow to be found in Brazil? My to-morrow is still a French to-morrow, with the scents and colours of childhood mornings. It is no use to me here. Here my time is measured like the shade.

The only thing that brings me any relief is the sense of the ridiculous. Twenty years ago I faced the first war in very poor circumstances. I joined in like a schoolboy with twenty francs a week pocket money going into the casino at Deauville. This war finds me still poorer; poorer for all that I have given away myself, day after day, without taking any note or account of it, so that I don't even know whether I have given away much or little; or whether I have lost it. Anyhow, what does it matter? Here I am this war in the heat of Brazil beside a river—goodness knows where it comes from or where it goes to. It just flows for the sake of flowing, rolls for the sake of rolling, thousands of

miles, league after league, through rich and poor country, where dry stakes become trees and trees dry stakes again as the times and seasons change. But why talk of times and seasons when the year is divided simply into wet and dry? It makes no difference whether the roving cattle find enough to eat or whether they starve and waste away half buried in the long grass they can't chew—this raging sun turns it practically into a mineral poison. I don't hate this country, but I can't say I love it. I should love it if it could love me-if it were capable of that give-and-take we experience in old countries. But old countries are filled with what we have given them: this one has never received a thing from a living soul. For centuries it has done nothing but chew the cud of its own hunger and thirst, waiting for man to bend over it day by day, with his smile and gentle touch. How we have cared for our own land! Her coat of green and russet is groomed and glossy like a prize animal's. But all this land has to show is a wretched skin covered with sores, a wrinkled hide swarming with vermin, spattered with brambles, deluged with the rains, a back cracked, pitted and ulcerous, and in flood-time covered with a dressing of river mud.

The Academy botanists-I mean the provincial poets or whatever they are (I can't think of their proper name)—would like to set themselves up as a kind of step-mother to this country, quite oblivious of the fact that it is an expensive business to fit a country for human habitation and that every square inch of French soil has cost a man's life; while this huge uncultivated land, where a parish is as big as a state and a province as large as a continent—this land has hardly drunk as much blood in ten centuries as a single free town of ours in the same time. But when it has caused enough suffering and when men have suffered their fill at its hands and for its sake, only then will they begin to understand its language and teach it theirs. But thank God it hasn't yet opened its mouth—or so much as attracted others to talk to it. The unending glare and the unending silence go well together, but you soon find it more oppressive than you thought. Until I had felt its weight, I never realized how our French countryside prattles. There, the tiniest village you dash through at fifty miles an hour on your motor-bicycle fills your ears with the buzz of voices, the sound of mocking laughter, and it follows you for miles; and when night comes and your head is on your

pillow, it goes on throbbing in your temples. Here there is nothing to compare with it. After twenty leagues on horseback, if your temples throb, it is useless to try and make sense of the nonsensical noise. Its only meaning is that you have just escaped

sunstroke, so take an aspirin and go to sleep.

The only thing that brings me relief is the sense of the ridiculous. Heat melts the grease away, and in the process leaves you with a very different picture of yourself, a picture with all the soft parts gone. My own idea of myself never counted for much or loomed very large, but now it is down to the smallest dimensions imaginable. It gives me no bother at all now. I feel I don't have to make my life fit in with it or make sacrifices for it. I can laugh at this picture of myself with nothing to stop me—a diversion barred to dear old Montherlant. He will go on talking to himself in the same old way. I can laugh with the picture

before me: and I can weep too.

In this remote spot, this fierce glare that takes the colour even out of the violet shadows and turns everything into an impalpable grey dust set glowing by the smallest glint, certain people I had completely forgotten burst into my memory like insects dazzled and dizzied with the light. I did not evoke their memory, heaven knows; they just sprang up; suddenly they were there, sucked and snatched up, caught in the great luminous swirl. Out they come, a little dishevelled and still dripping with the dankness of their underworld, their coats flecked with mildew and their hair tangled with spiders' webs. . . . There they are for a moment, motionless, apparently unaware of what is happening to them, solemn with that strange solemnity of people from a dreamworld, their collars raised to protect them against the blistering downpour, and their chins cupped pensively in their hands, while the slight substance of them melts away like a thin steam spiral between their shoulder blades. This dryness rids you of a large number of ghosts which you imagined forgiven and forgotten, ghosts that have survived in some muddy pool and little did you know it—an old illusion rutted into the soul: it takes such a little stagnant water to preserve an evil thought. God grant in the end that this harsh sun may dry up all the springs of bitterness in me.

Last night I watched the rain falling on this tropical forest (don't mix it up with the marvellous equatorial forest)—this

unplotted pigmy forest, just an enormous creeper spreading over a great part of the earth surface, a stumpy irresistible growth its branches twisted with drought, carried on crooked thighs, its deformed shoots, millions of them, like ropy growths with hardly a spot of green on them; yes, a giant creeper, that sounds like a drum when you beat it. Some weeks ago I fancied it had reached the limits of decay and was ready to fall to dust on this baked earth, baked harder than brick. Yet here it is again, alive and green, swollen with water, bursting under its carapace of bark, pushing out its low forehead like the brow of a bull with a mass of new woolly curls. It presses on every side of our little clay and lime house, noses its way across the paddock tree by tree, and would soon bring down our paddock wall and house if the drought did not return to torture it again until the next rainy season. It's this forest, not its splendid soaring equatorial rival, but this dwarf forest that always makes good its losses, little by little investing towns and then crunching them like glass. Out there in the west it was too much even for those wily, persistent Jesuit settlers. I'd like to see the expression on the face of some friend of mine if, straight from the glades of Fontainebleau, without seeing anything on the way, he were to wake up to-morrow morning in sight of this featureless horizon, this still, never-ending scrubland, without a hint of the skeleton it hides, where small rocky spurs are all we have by way of village steeples. "Why," he would say, "this is copse-land." No, it isn't. It is the waterless, tortured, tantalized forest, dying of thirst six months of the year, with rivers and cataracts rumbling in the distance. . . . The worthy patrons of the brasserie Lipp, looking out and seeing the rain-splashed pavements of the place Saint-Germain-des-Pres, and cursing themselves for coming out without their mackintoshes, can have no idea what it is like to hear the rain falling in this place, to hear it without seeing it, to breathe its acrid smoke. . . . I heard it on the roof—nothing hides from us the high roof frame where each morning, when the tiles are still cool, the first breeze of dawn is caught in the beams and rafters, gently, like torn silk. The rain here does not make you think of a cloud discharging its moisture, but rather of a river on its majestic course, or still more of a great liquid arch between heaven and earth, signifying reconciliation, peace, pardon, remission for all; a sleep more profound and sweet than any sleep, a night within

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the night. But for all that I knew it would not bring healing to the land, still less rest and sleep, it would not put the warped forest right again in two months, nor bring deliverance to shrivelled, mis-shapen branches and knotted limbs; it would only turn these chronic invalids into monsters tougher than any prize-winner in our French forests. The wood of this forest blunts the steel of the axe; fire blackens but does not kill it; its roots act like a hose to put out the fire, manufacturing a sap that suddenly bursts forth in shoots of green, astonishingly fresh and pure. A few months ago this vitality, like a legless cripple's, made me feel sick. Yes, I know what I would tell my friends about this land on a fair, clear winter's day's in Provence in front of a fire of vine branches. With a pen in my hand I feel I am doing violence to its primitive misery by thus trying to portray it, like a literary pedlar exploiting the world of suffering for gain, cynically showing off its rags, exposing it in all its nakedness to the sedentary old maids who form the bulk of subscribers to the circulating libraries. If I were a mere passing guest, anyone who knows me ever so little would know that I would never confide any "impressions" to the printer. It was precisely to avoid such a necessity till my dying day that I left France . . . I even refrained from writing so much as a word about this country so long as I was a newcomer and felt myself under no obligation to it, a benevolent spectator, a mere onlooker. I feel I have the right to speak now, because my fortune has come to be bound up in some small way with its fortune, my effort with its effort, my poverty with its poverty. I am no longer an outsider, I belong; my wife and children eat this country's bread (or rice, to be exact: wheat hardly grows here). I am right inside now, but there is nothing extraordinary in that and nothing to be proud of. This hinterland is open to all; you can get here if you are prepared for thirty-six hours' jolting and a few days on horseback. Well, I have left railways behind; I have seen where the rails end like a thin steel trap beneath the parasite vegetation. I have seen the last station and the last bridge. Facing me right and left, the low woodland creeps and creeps over thousands of square miles, on the one side towards Matto Grasso, Paraguay and the Amazon, on the other to the Pacific. If you draw straight lines on the map they will not cut through many towns. And behind me, though an occasional railway runs across it, the forest

still holds its own, still toils and labours, giving in only in front of Belle-Horizon, the great green capital of Minas. Don't think this is because it is afraid of man, but on ore mountains (iron-mountains in truth) there is nothing for it to bite on. Two hundred and fifty miles of it on that side before it gives up, and we feel that density of forest between ourselves and the nearest town with its avenues and gardens—a town, by the way, not as old as I am, reclaimed in less than a man's lifetime from the wild growth like a Holland from the sea. But the forest still besieges this town; it never gives up, pushing a thin advance

guard right up to the arid rust-coloured ridges.

That's how I talk to you about this country, but it's not how I talk to myself. What I say to myself could not be written down, and when I stop talking to myself then I shall understand it completely, I shall love this country. I have lived long enough now to know that M. Barrès has never loved Lorraine nor M. Charles Maurras Provence. They have tried passionately to find themselves there, but that is another matter; the longer I look at them working themselves into a torment with their unresponsive mistresses, the longer I listen to their whining, the less I believe they are really enjoying it. I will not pursue the ugly comparison: but I should be glad if the impossible happened and some of the Church's literary apologists sat up and took notice.

Yes, it would be better in a way to say nothing at all about this country since it would only deceive us in our ignorance, and take me further away from it without bringing you any nearer. But what can I do? The biggest risk would still be dissatisfaction with myself. After working so hard for twenty years I am only just coming to believe that I was right in thinking I really am condemned to this conventional literary language. I have never taken it very seriously; I often loathe it. Remember this is the only instrument God has given me to work you into an appreciation of what I hold dear. I have not deserved any other instrument but this hurdy-gurdy I play below your window, reader. When I was still young, I used to turn the handle a little more daintily, perhaps, and lean my head a little too far over my poor grindmill. That is all over now; please remember that. I cannot consider my instrument a master product; I have carried it too long; the strap is cutting into my shoulder. I shall go on grinding until I

have nothing left in the mill, and that will be that. I shall return it empty to God, and I shall even try to give it one last careful rub-up before I die, not that I think I shall startle the heavenly choir, but just for the honour of the profession. Remember too that I have given up playing under your windows. The old man has moved to a new pitch; no more commissionaires or policemen! I don't stand waiting any longer for friendly faces to appear at the windows; I am no longer tempted to peer up at wealthy first-floors and geranium window-boxes. My music comes to you now from the other side of the world, witnessing my integrity not my art. It won't be my fault when you cease hearing it. I shall have wound up gallantly my career as a street-singer in a land where there aren't any streets or roads—unless you imagine you can always hear me. It is not my song but what I sing that is immortal.

I know a man who understands this country now. He was one of those settlers who lived somewhere, nobody knows quite where, in a green hollow in the vast, black-pebbly Geraes. He was found dead, and was buried according to custom at the spot where he fell, where it pleased God to take him. The high cross that keeps vigil over him is a land-mark when we come riding home at night. He is our guest. How very far we two have

travelled that he should die at my door!

* * *

I am writing this in the bare house that once belonged to a cowman. It is so old, so broken-down, that it seems to be gradually subsiding, sinking into the earth, till the giant grasses reach the roof and murmur round it. The failing light reaches me as though it came through deep water, an indescribable, delicate, pale green. The earthen walls, overgrown with roots, are teeming with silent life like the soil itself. I am sure the poor thoughts I entrust to those I love cannot penetrate the first ring of shade and escape from the depths of this green life, from this peace never meant for man. No, I do not claim that my thoughts can leap the seas. I don't in the least imagine that I am the fine point of the world's awareness. All I would say is that the small portion of truth I have in my keeping has been deposited here beyond the reach of liars. If it merely depended on me I should wish to bury it deeper still; for what I value about it is its truthfulness,

not other people's approval or praise of it—the worth-while thing to me is the truth it contains or rather what is left of it, what I haven't squandered over there in useless controversy—I might have lost it completely in *that*. I have been given my share of truth, as each of you has been given yours; and I have understood very late in the day that I shall never add anything to it; I can only hope to serve it by bringing my life and my writings into line with it. . . .

I understand more and more clearly that I shall never add anything to the truth that has been entrusted to me; I have grown out of any such delusion. It is I who ought to measure myself up to it, for it is suffocating inside me; I am its prison, not its altar. I ought to give it the homage of my whole being. Only my death will release it. If I were to die I should free myself with it; I should escape with it into the dreamless night. Meanwhile until my task is done, we two, my truth and I, shall stand face to face; the real drama will be played out between us. My work, if work it is, shall never add anything to my truth. What does it matter whether my work lives? The grace I ask for is that it should come back to life, even though in another century, another age, another land, another soul, and one that knows nothing of me, not even my name. For to have died and to live again is a thousand times more glorious than never to have died.

REVIEWS

WILLIAM HOGARTH

The Drawings of William Hogarth. By A. P. Oppé. (Phaidon Press. 25s.)

THE greatest attraction of this book for most people will be the excellent illustrations which reproduce 120 drawings, mostly full page plates. But its chief aim is to provide for students and connoisseurs

a reliable corpus of Hogarth's drawings for the first time.

Hogarth was an immensely successful artist. The popularity of his prints naturally brought about a demand for his drawings in the late eighteenth century. To sift the authentic drawings from the spurious is now a matter of great expertise. The extremely detailed critical catalogue in Mr. Oppé's book is a work of admirable scholarship and will not easily be shaken or superseded. One of its major contributions is the reproduction in full of the Marquess of Exeter's little known collection which was mostly acquired by the ninth Earl of Exeter from Hogarth's widow before 1793: it still remains at Burghley House. The two most famous collections are, of course, those in the Royal Library, Windsor (which includes many purchased by George

IV), and in the British Museum.

It is very curious that we know so few direct drawings from life by Hogarth. One might have expected numerous sketch books and detailed studies for the immensely varied crowds of picturesque characters who gesticulate so vigorously in pictures like "Southwark Fair" and the Election Series, but in fact they do not exist. Can great numbers have been lost? Mr. Oppé thinks not. He recalls that Hogarth himself in his manuscript notes for an autobiography said that he drew so little from nature and maintained that it was so little necessary to do so that a brother artist turned his doctrine to ridicule by saying: "The only way to draw well is never to draw at all." As a young engraver for booksellers he decided that to draw well in the usual way, "to draw objects like nature," would take too long and leave him no time for the ordinary enjoyments of life. He therefore trained himself to memorize habitually and systematically, to fill his mind with images which he could combine and manipulate, as writers use letters to compose words and in fact to construct a grammar of forms. In a later note he says: "I sometimes took the life for correcting the parts I had not perfectly remembered." Obviously the riotous events and violent customers that Hogarth liked to portray would not patiently allow a sketcher in their midst. As Mr. Sickert once wrote: 'Hogarth's 'Modern Midnight Conversation' was not done from eleven men simultaneously drunk in a studio from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

with an interval for luncheon."

So the accepted drawings here reproduced are mostly sketches for compositions, such as the "Idleness and Industry" Series, some eight drawings for the painfully elaborate "Stages of Cruelty," with a few portraits of semi-caricatural character, and nude figures, probably done at the Life Class in St. Martin's Lane. It is fascinating to compare the delicate, sensitive use of the pencil in Hogarth's sketch for a "First Stage of Cruelty" with the wooden, even line and detail in the drawings prepared for the use of the engraver of the plates. Mr. Oppé thinks that the artist was aware that the spirited sketch might be valued by a connoisseur but was conscious that he was working for prints for a large public who would demand explicit detailed factual description.

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What was Hogarth's purpose in starting on his long series of Satires and Moralities-"The Harlot's Progress," "The Rake's Progress," "Gin Lane," "Beer Street" and the rest? No doubt he had his share in the desire to reform the world and probably the hard-hitting of these popular pictures and prints helped to mitigate some of the grosser habits of the age. But his initial impulse is made clearer if we consider his own very candid and sensible statement when he decided to become a painter and escape from the bondage of engraving. He says that he chose as his special subject "the painting and engraving of modern moral subjects, a field not yet broken up in any country or any age-something intermediate between the sublime and the grotesque. I wished to compose pictures on canvas similar to representations on the stage, my players were to exhibit a dumb show by means of certain actions and gestures." The moral element was to be prominent, "subjects that would both entertain and improve the mind and bid fair to be of the greatest public utility." Hogarth was readily conscious of the follies and vices of others, was himself brimful of prejudices and antipathies—against foreign musicians, all Papist practices, and the ridiculous affectations of the idle rich—and the rest follows. The morality of behaviour in his works is unimpeachably sound, it would—and did—appeal to every police magistrate, but seems very much a morality of success, on the lines of Honesty the Best Policy.

In his interesting and scrupulously fair introduction Mr. Oppé does not acclaim Hogarth as a fine draughtsman in the sense of one devoted to drawing for its own sake, for its expression of form and movement, and reminds us that his claim to immortality rests on his prints and subject pictures. It is true that none of the drawings reproduced would bear comparison with the brilliance of Tiepolo, or the finesse of Gabriel de St. Aubin among his contemporaries. But Hogarth curiously enough draws much better when he takes up brush and oil paint instead of a point. The French soldier in "Calais Gate" or the figures

in "Marriage à la Mode" in the National Gallery are ready examples. If Hogarth's ideas, interests and morals were those of the common man, his gifts of observation, memory and narrative were truly exceptional and astonishing. He knew himself as well as he knew his public, and it is difficult to imagine subject matter or scheme that would have drawn so much characteristic work from him as his moralities. This book certainly adds to our better understanding of Hogarth as well as of his drawings.

HUBERT WELLINGTON.

ENGLISH CATHEDRALS

Cathedrals and How They Were Built. By D. H. S. Cranage. (Cambridge University Press. 8s. 6d.)

Cathedral Books: No. 2—Durham. Introduction by W. A. Pantin. (Lund Humphries. 3s. 6d.)

R. CRANAGE, who as Dean of Norwich did such notable work in caring for the beauties of that cathedral, is well qualified to write on cathedrals, among which he includes great churches not of cathedral rank. The operative words in the title, "and how they were built," indicate one half of his approach: his inclusion of a few great Continental churches and of one little-known design never put into execution the other half. In short, this is a treatise, as the author says, "chiefly . . . (on) monuments of art and engineering skill," and every page of the text testifies to his technical knowledge. He deals first with foundations and stability of walls. He gives most interesting descriptions of the Norman foundations, laid over running water, of Winchester and of Sir Francis Fox's famous restoration, and other examples are cited, notably Amiens. In treating of walls he emphasizes the importance of mortar, giving an illustration of a Roman fragment at Wroxeter and mentioning the early collapse of several Norman towers.

He then proceeds to arched vaulting, first with the semi-circular and then with the pointed arch, dealing with the English (as opposed to the French) habit of introducing, first, ridge-ribs, and then intermediate ribs, until we reach fan-vaulting; and then to buttresses, flying buttresses, and pressures; after which he lists weaknesses as he sees them in the Gothic scheme—thick central pillars narrowing the central space, the many pillars of the arcades, and the combustible roof above the vault, and modern as well as ancient methods to avoid this last. Finally, he treats of the dome from Santa Sophia (sixth century)

onwards, but, as he notes in his bibliography, does so rather by examples than as an historical process: its historical context includes Diocletian's division of the Roman Empire, the Normans in the Mediterranean, and the capture of Constantinople, which are not mentioned. Both by diagrams and in the plates, the book, domes apart, is admirably illustrated: Sir Francis Fox's divers at Winchester, Sir William Emerson's design for Liverpool Cathedral, the great nave (justly praised but little known in England) of Gerona in Spain.

The book is beautifully produced, but the text has weaknesses. Dr. Cranage does not sufficiently simplify his great knowledge. It is a mistake to begin with foundations: for a building is conceived from the roof downwards (as Dr. Cranage later allows), and the foundations, planned in relation to the space to be roofed, should come later. Secondly, the initial stage in cross vaulting (with semi-circular side arches and elliptical diagonal ones) could be omitted as an unnecessary complication. Indeed, the whole treatment of the development of the cross-vault before the Gothic pointed arch, alike in text and diagram, is much less clear than, for instance, in Heathcote Statham's fortyyear-old Critical History of Architecture, and the Roman cross-vaults are not even mentioned. Nor is fan-vaulting made easier to understand by being termed "conoidal." A few arch Anglican jests in dubious taste might well have been omitted. In brief, the book is well worth having for the sake of its plates; its text contains a great deal of interest, but falls at times between two stools, having too much technical detail and a conflicting need for brevity.

Among the cathedrals of England Durham is unique. Dr. Cranage rightly notes that its pointed transverse arches (c. 1128-33) are the first, or among the first, examples. He includes a photograph inside its triforium shown in section among the twenty-six illustrations, often very striking, of the second of Lund Humphries' series of Cathedral Books (General Editor, Paul Wengraf). It is refreshing to see how differently Mr. W. A. Pantin treats of the chronicler's story of the Western Galilee Chapel at Durham. Mr. Pantin's text is lucid yet includes all revelant information, relating the cathedral to historical events, and its architecture to contemporary architecture in England and, where necessary, on the Continent. If subsequent numbers in this series of cathedral books maintain this standard, the series will be a joy to collect and re-read. This one on Durham is excellently illustrated, and both books, Dr. Cranage's bound in cloth, and Mr. Pantin's in wrappers, are good examples of their two different kinds of book production.

EDMUND ESDAILE.

MODERN POETRY

Modern Poetry and the Tradition. By Cleanth Brooks. (Editions Poetry London. 12s. 6d.)

ANY readers," writes Mr. Brooks, "find modern poetry difficult, and difficult in a special sense." This sounds like the opening sentence of still another book on "modern poetry for the plain reader"; and one of the author's aims is certainly to provide a simple guide to the complexities of contemporary verse. The title is an accurate description of his thesis. He challenges the widely held view that modern poetry is "anti-traditional" and argues that it is part of the main European tradition which runs from the English Metaphysical Poets through the French Symbolists to Yeats and Eliot. He is surely right in saying that the "metaphysical element" is "something basic in all poetry" and that there is a "sense in which all poetry is symbolist poetry." The first two chapters, "Metaphor and the Tradition" and "Wit and High Seriousness" will necessarily appear somewhat elementary to competent readers of contemporary poetry who have long ago discarded the view that "wit is to be associated with barren and shallow ingenuity"; but his examples are fresh and are skilfully analysed. The third chapter, "Metaphysical Poetry and Propagandist Art," disposes of the Marxist argument that living poets are faced with the choice of joining the party or retreating to the Ivory Tower; and he observes very pertinently that Marxist literary theory "represents little advance over the Victorians with their 'message-hunting' and their Browning societies." Chapter IV, "Symbolist Poetry and the Ivory Tower," criticizes Edmund Wilson for arguing in Axel's Castle that the Symbolist movement was "a retreat from Science and reality." On the other hand, Mr. Brooks weakens his case by not going much more deeply into the Symbolist achievement. He should have considered the philosophical changes behind modern poetry and developed the hints thrown out by Eliot in his essay on "The Metaphysical Poets." The remaining chapters contain detailed criticism of contemporary English and American poets (to whom Mr. Brooks is sometimes too kind) and useful studies of The Waste Land and Yeats's mythology. The final chapter consists of "Notes for a Revised History of English Poetry."

We must share the author's regret that the scope of his book prevented a discussion of Hopkins and Pound, and it is a pity that he did not develop his shrewd comments on Whitman who is so often regarded as the symbol of the modern poet in revolt. But he has written a sensitive and intelligent book which is well suited to its

purpose.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Man and the Poet. By K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar; with a Foreword by Jerome D'Souza, S.J. (Cumberlege, O.U.P., Indian Branch.)

Ethought," has in sixty years changed from a somewhat indifferent spouse to a remarkably reverential widow; as token of which the literary offspring of this Jesuit patriot have now come into their own. Since 1930, when the long-delayed second Edition of Poems of G. M. H. was accompanied by the first graceful Life of the poet (by Fr. G. F. Lahey), we have had a continuous stream of periodical essays, critical studies and biographies—from England, Ireland, Wales, America, France, Holland, Australia and elsewhere—the best of them testifying to his genius for sanctity and song; and others are promised for the near future. Meanwhile we have to consider a sympathetic critical biography written by the Indian and Hindu Professor of English

Literature in the Andhra University, Waltair.

Compared with the biographies previously published by Fr. Lahey. John Pick (1942) and Eleanor Ruggles (1947), Dr. Iyengar's cannot be said to supersede any of them, certainly not the latter two, which are still in print. Ready for the press in 1939, his book was held up by the war; but although the author claims to have taken advantage of "fresh material on the subject published in the interval," he has actually (and to his own prejudice) drawn only on Pick's book. The many omissions in his "Select Bibliography" are ominous, and since he has obviously had no access to original documents, his book contains no new facts and no really new theories or readings. Nevertheless Dr. Iyengar was by no means ill-equipped for his task, having been educated at a Jesuit college and having striven to gain a sound knowledge of Hopkins's religious background by "extensive reading of modern Catholic literature." The result is a monograph which is eminently readable and suggestive but not, perhaps, indispensable. In the many places where Dr. Iyengar gives an independent personal opinion of some aspect of his subject his writing is stimulating and, as testimony, valuable. He is a sensitive scholar, and his background of Hindu mysticism (or knowledge thereof) allows him to do full justice to what Fr. Lahey, Evelyn Underhill and the present writer have regarded as definite though limited mystical elements in Hopkins's poetry (e.g. he quotes Dr. Pick's shrewd comment that the "terrible" sonnets are really "love poems"); at the same time, the detachment imposed by his own Asiatic loyalties gives a certain unique and universal significance to the quiet fervour with which he expounds something which is (in a sense) alien to himself as something which is nevertheless

spiritually familiar and vital—both to him and to all those for whom life has, incontestably, a supernatural basis. His occasional comparisons between Hopkins and a Sufi mystic, Tagore, or Sri Aurobindo are

interesting and often significant.

The work consists of an Introduction and fourteen chapters of biography, ranging from "Boyhood: Early Poems," "Oxford," "Conversion," etc., to "Hopkins's Political Views" and "Ireland: The Terrible Sonnets: Last Days." This general pattern is becoming almost too familiar; but before the "Conclusion" (which contains a good concise tribute to Hopkins as a critic) there are two chapters of technical criticism—"Hopkins's Prosody" and "Technical and Linguistic Experiments." The now well known main facts of the poet's life (as drawn from Lahey, the Letters and the Note-books) are presented with simple clarity and with a frequent sharpness of perception, as in the following:

Hopkins was throughout perfectly conscious of his debt to Bridges; it had given him what no money can procure, love. (p. 110.)

They quickly became friends; Patmore saw at once that Hopkins was both a good critic of poetry and a good Jesuit priest. (p. 118.)

The weakness of the popular biographer for superficial generalization had been shown by Eleanor Ruggles when she said that the Oxford Movement was really "a romantic revival," and that Ritualism (exclusively) produced Aestheticism. Similarly Dr. Iyengar says (p. 15):

A good deal of what Lytton Strachey said about Newman seems to be applicable to Gerard Hopkins also. Hopkins, too, was "a child of the Romantic Revival, a creature of emotion and memory, a dreamer whose secret spirit dwelt apart in delectable mountains, [etc.] . . . Even in his own age he might, at Cambridge, whose cloisters have ever been consecrated to poetry and common sense, have followed quietly in Gray's footsteps. . . . At Oxford he was doomed.

The elements of truth here are wickedly distorted by omissions, half-truths and sickly superaesthetical implications. Hopkins the future theologian, the "Communist in a way," the Classicist, the realist, is not even glimpsed in such rant. When the string of false impressions has done its work Dr. Iyengar tries to undo the mischief by adding: "In a truer sense than is grasped by Strachey, Newman and Hopkins merely realized their potentialities, intellectually and spiritually, at Oxford." The "merely" is rich, in more than one sense. Why not leave "effect" to the Stracheys and get on with the quest for the whole truth?

The section in Chapter III on Hopkins's conception of "inscape" and "instress" is enhanced by a comparison with St. Bonaventure's doctrine of primary and secondary vestiges of God's handiwork in Nature; but the author was at fault in not linking up these observations with the more direct and powerful influence of Duns Scotus, who is treated later, and rather superficially, in Chapter X. Had Dr. Iyengar known the studies of the Scotist influence which have appeared between Fr. C. Devlin's New Verse essay (1935) and the important critique by W. A. M. Peters, S.J. (1948) he would not, I think, have been satisfied with his own account. Furthermore, a knowledge of earlier studies of the technical aspects of Hopkins's poetry would have enabled him to avoid the serious blunders which mar the chapters on the Prosody and the Linguistic Experiments. A really accurate exposition of Hopkins's Counterpointed and Sprung Rhythms and "outriding feet" was impossible without reference to the MSS. or to an authoritative study based upon them, and the soundness of some of the author's pages does not compensate for such misleading scansions

/Joy/fall to/thee, father/Francis,/(Deutsch., 23.i.)

which should be

Jóy fàll to / thée, fàther / Fráncis, / (only three main stresses), and

With the / gnārls of the / nāils in / thēe, / nīche of the / lānce, his (ibid., iii)1

instead of

With the / gnárls of the / náils in thee, / níche of the / lánce, his (only four stresses).

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In tracking "outrides" the author moves in a darkness lit only by the glow-worm of his own temerity. He cites poems containing "successful examples" without indicating a single one, either correctly or incorrectly. When he does specify some "at the end of the lines" in Felix Randal (p. 166) he is patently wrong, as a reference to Poems, Third Edition, pp. 237-8 will prove. Knowing nothing of Welsh poetry and cynghanedd, Dr. Iyengar (like Dr. Peters) is loth to recognize the now generally acknowledged and highly important Welsh influence on the poet's diction, rhythm, imagery and indeed on his whole conception of "inscape" in poetry. Hence he repeats the conventional niggling criticism concerning "barbarous" and "monstrous"

There is a further confusion in the use of the "classical" mark of syllabic length (---) to indicate stress (/).

rhymes, failing to see that in many instances Hopkins was adapting a Welsh practice to English usage, thereby creating a new standard of

appreciation.

Dr. Iyengar is certainly responsive to the beauty of Hopkins's poetry, and has good things to say about his principle of "unity in variety" and his affinity with Wordsworth; but he seldom probes deeply into meanings and implications, and some of his textual criticism in Chapter XVII betrays a lack of the finer sensibility. There is no point in merely shaking one's head, at this date, over such exquisite expressions as "leaves me a lonely began" and "See his wind-lilylocks-laced," in both of which the poet has "inscaped" the words and the object.

A real merit of this biography is in the sympathy and understanding with which the author has tried to solve the problems of Hopkins's adjustment to the religious life. On pp. 134 et seq. the word "doubt" is often used in a misleading manner; but as Fr. D'Souza claims in his Foreword, "the problems of religious psychology are squarely faced and the fundamental place of the religious quest in Hopkins's development brought out with admirable fairness." The problems could have been more deeply analysed, however, and more prominence given to Hopkins's ambitions in Music.

Mrs. Ruggles' extremely competent book is still the most detached and detailed biography, though in "tone" and penetration Dr. Pick's and Dr. Iyengar's are often superior. Though more valuable as a symptom than as an absolute achievement, Dr. Iyengar's *Life* does leave the impression of G. M. H. as a man who was truly great, whose life was wholly beneficent, whose poetic genius was germinal, whose suffering was purgative, redemptive and ultimately fruitful, both to

himself and to the world at large.

W. H. GARDNER.

EXISTENTIALIST PHILOSOPHIES

Existentialist Philosophies. An Introduction. By Emmanuel Mounier. Translated by Eric Blow. (Rockliff. 15s.)

A BOOK on existentialism by M. Mounier, the well-known exponent of personalism, has a peculiar interest in view of the fact that personalism is not without its affinities with existentialism. If the existentialist stream of thought is, in very general terms, "a reaction against the excesses of the philosophy of ideas and the philosophy of things," the personalist stream obviously flows in the same direction. The author, conscious of these affinities, does not adopt the coldly critical and hostile attitude which philosophers belonging to certain

other schools are likely to adopt. On the other hand, being a philosopher himself, he is not content simply to expound; he gives us what one might call a comparative study and criticism of the existentialist philosophies, the criticism being, at least by implication, constructive as well as destructive. The author's method is not that of taking the existentialist philosophers one by one but that of treating successively certain leading concepts and themes of the existentialist philosophies. This method may, of course, present some difficulties to a reader who has little or no previous knowledge of the subject; but it has the advantage of enabling the author to keep constantly before the reader's mind the similarities and the dissimilarities between the different

philosophies.

M. Mounier recognizes the weaknesses of existentialism, particularly of certain brands of it; for example, the absence of any true recognition of genuine spiritual communion between persons in the philosophy of Sartre, and the difficulty experienced by Jaspers in attaching any objective and universal meaning to the word "truth." But at the same time M. Mounier emphasizes the serious mission of existentialism, which "marks a return of the religious element into a world which has tried to represent itself as pure manifestation." It doubtless sounds paradoxical to suggest that even atheist existentialism represents a return of the religious element; but in so far as atheist existentialism draws attention to the logical consequences of atheism, it certainly helps to illuminate the importance of the problem of God, both theoretically and practically. If existentialism has become a craze, that is scarcely the fault of the movement itself; and M. Mounier deprecates "the degeneration into idle daily gossiping of a philosophy whose whole purpose is to drag us away from our idle gossiping.

Possibly I am simply betraying the prejudices of an Englishman, if I say that I do not care for the author's style and that I think that a greater lucidity is desirable and that more calm and less breathlessness would be in place. In any case the faults, if faults they are, are not due to the translator, who, so far as I am capable of judging, has done his difficult work very well. None the less, one or two of the explanatory notes contributed by Mr. Blow caused me some surprise. It is odd to learn that, according to Kant, "it is only in the transcendent world of true reality that we have true knowledge," and I hardly think that a "halfway-between proposition" adequately represents Hegel's idea of a "synthesis." There are one or two misprints: for example, "the

Seinde" (p. 30) instead of das Seiende.

FREDERICK C. COPLESTON.

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